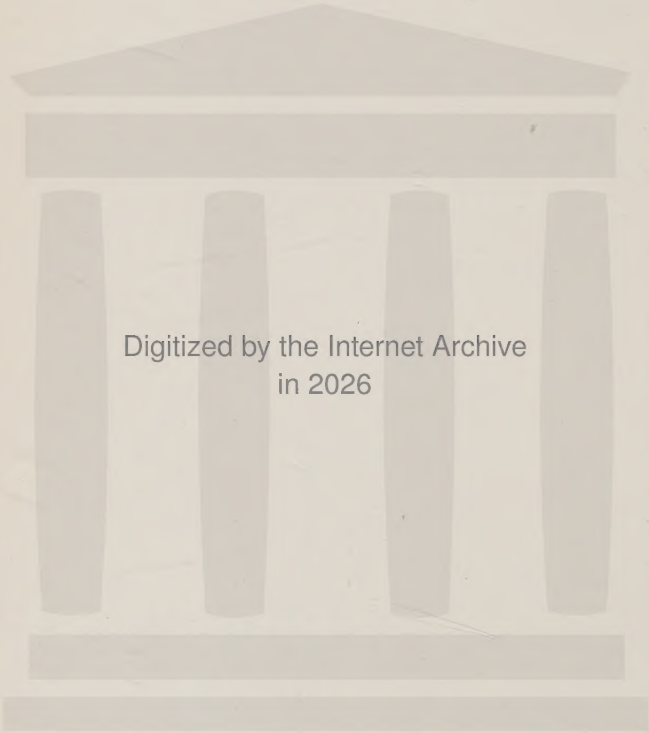
Lincoln Smith Library
of the
Congregational Conference
of
Washington

BR 125 .G494 1928

Gilkey, Charles Whitney,
1882-1968.

Present-day dilemmas in
religion

Washington Congregational Conference,
PLYMOUTH CHURCH,
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON
230
G39P


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/presentdaydilemm0000char_y0v4

THE COLE LECTURES FOR 1927

*Delivered Before* VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

---

# PRESENT-DAY DILEMMAS IN RELIGION

BY

CHARLES W. GILKEY

# *COLE LECTURES*

*Present-Day Dilemmas in Religion* . . . 1927
By Charles W. Gilkey, A.M., D.D.

*Expanding Horizons* . . . . . 1926
By Cornelius Woelfkin, D.D., LL.D.

*The Program of Jesus* . . . . . 1925
By Bishop Edwin D. Mouzon.

*Imagination and Religion* . . . . . 1924
By S. Parkes Cadman, D.D.

*The Gospel of Fellowship* . . . . . 1923
By Charles D. Williams, D.D.

*Christianity and Progress* . . . . . 1922
By Harry Emerson Fosdick.

*The Foundations of Faith* . . . . . 1921
By John Kelman, D.D.

*A New Mind for the New Age* . . . . 1920
By Henry Churchill King, D.D., LL.D.

*The Productive Beliefs* . . . . . 1919
By Lynn H. Hough, D.D.

*Old Truths and New Facts* . . . . . 1918
By Charles E. Jefferson, D.D.

*The North American Idea* . . . . . 1917
By James A. Macdonald, LL.D.

*The Foundation of Modern Religion* . . 1916
By Herbert B. Workman, D.D.

*Winning the World for Christ* . . . . 1915
By Bishop Walter R. Lambuth.

*Personal Christianity* . . . . . 1914
By Bishop Francis J. McConnell.

*The God We Trust* . . . . . 1913
By G. A. Johnston Ross.

*What Does Christianity Mean?* . . . . 1912
By W. H. P. Faunce.

*Some Great Leaders in the World Movement.* 1911
By Robert E. Speer.

*In the School of Christ* . . . . . 1910
By Bishop William Fraser McDowell.

*Jesus the Worker* . . . . . 1909
By Charles McTyeire Bishop, D.D.

*The Fact of Conversion* . . . . . 1908
By George Jackson, B.A.

*God's Message to the Human Soul* . . . 1907
By John Watson (Ian Maclaren).

*Christ and Science* . . . . . 1906
By Francis Henry Smith.

*The Universal Elements of the Christian Religion* . . . . . 1905
By Charles Cuthbert Hall.

*The Religion of the Incarnation* . . . . 1903
By Bishop Eugene Russell Hendrix.

# PRESENT-DAY DILEMMAS IN RELIGION

BY

CHARLES W. GILKEY, A.M. D.D.

MINISTER OF THE HYDE PARK BAPTIST CHURCH AND
PROFESSOR IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DIVINITY SCHOOL

NASHVILLE, TENN.
COKESBURY PRESS
1928

COPYRIGHT, 1928
BY
LAMAR & WHITMORE

Printed in the United States of America

TO

G. B. G.

WITH WHOM TO LIVE
IS TO MAKE DAILY DISCOVERIES
IN THE RICHNESS OF LIFE

000301

090301

# THE COLE LECTURES

THE late Colonel E. W. Cole of Nashville, Tennessee, donated to Vanderbilt University the sum of five thousand dollars, afterwards increased by Mrs. E. W. Cole to ten thousand, the design and conditions of which gift are stated as follows:

"The object of this fund is to establish a foundation for a perpetual Lectureship in connection with the School of Religion of the University, to be restricted in its scope to a defense and advocacy of the Christian religion. The lectures shall be delivered at such intervals, from time to time, as shall be deemed best by the Board of Trust; and the particular theme and lecturer will be determined by the Theological Faculty. Said lecture shall always be reduced to writing in full, and the manuscript of the same shall be the property of the University, to be published or disposed of by the Board of Trust at its discretion, the net proceeds arising therefrom to be added to the foundation fund, or otherwise used for the benefit of the School of Religion."

# PREFACE

WHEN, in the autumn of 1926, Dr. Cornelius Woelfkin was giving his deeply impressive Cole Lectures on "Expanding Horizons," he learned that Dr. Charles W. Gilkey would succeed him as Cole lecturer for 1927. He expressed gratification that Vanderbilt University was to have the privilege of a series of lectures by Dr. Gilkey and then added in his own gracious and unfeigned devotion, at once fatherly and brotherly, "You will like Charlie." His prediction was amply fulfilled.

Dr. Gilkey's lectures were given in May, 1927. They were heard with sustained interest by audiences that averaged one thousand in number. Those who heard the chaste English, the lucid style, and the discriminating thought of the lectures recognized that they were as truly good literature as captivating addresses. Dr. Gilkey showed great insight in the choice of his theme for the lectures—namely, "Present-Day Dilemmas in Religion." No word can better serve as the key-word to present-day thinking than the word "dilemma." The

state of mind implied in "dilemma" is probably more prevalent in the religious realm than in any other. There is also a wealth of suggestion in Dr. Gilkey's insistence that usually the relief for our dilemmas will be found in broader, inclusive thinking rather than in narrower, exclusive thinking. The Cole Lectures for 1927 furnish an illuminating commentary on Paul's all-inclusive confession of faith: "That they may know the mystery of God, even Christ, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden."

We launch these lectures on their mission to the thoughtful readers of our own and other lands, with the confident expectation that they will prove as helpful and inspiring to those who read them as they were to those of us who heard them. They have made May 15 to 20, 1927, a memorable week in Vanderbilt University history.

O. E. BROWN, *Dean,*
*Vanderbilt University School of Religion.*

## CONTENTS


CHAPTER I: DILEMMAS TRUE AND FALSE . . 3

CHAPTER II: THINGS NEW AND OLD . . . . 29

CHAPTER III: PRACTICAL SERVICE AND INNER RENEWAL . . . . . 61

CHAPTER IV: DEFINITION AND SYMBOL . . . 91

CHAPTER V: THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE GROUP. . . . . 125

CHAPTER VI: IN THE WORLD, BUT NOT OF IT. 155

# CHAPTER I

## DILEMMAS TRUE AND FALSE

"An inevitable dualism bisects nature, so that each thing is a half and suggests another thing to make it whole; as spirit, matter, etc. . . . The same dualism underlies the nature and condition of man." EMERSON.

# CHAPTER I

## DILEMMAS TRUE AND FALSE

WHEN I was a student of philosophy under William James, he told us in one lecture a story—significant for the thinking of both men—about his fellow-philosopher, Borden P. Bowne, then professor at Boston University. At the close of one of Bowne's classes, a puzzled student had come up to ask: "Professor, I didn't quite understand. Did you say it was thus, or so?" To which the wise man answered: "My young friend, the longer you live in this strange world, the more things you will find in it of which you cannot truly say *either . . . or*, but must learn to say *both . . . and.*"

The truth of that insight, as it is evidenced constantly in all the areas of our human experience, and more especially in the realm of religion, is the burden of these lectures.

When we lose our sense for the strangeness of the world we live in, the regular course of treatment for our dimmed eyes and dulled minds has long been an invita-

tion to our old acquaintance, the Man from Mars, to visit us once more, in order that through his unaccustomed eyes and ears we may realize afresh how queer a world this really is. Suppose now the first question of our newly arrived guest were to concern the physical conditions of our mundane existence. Do we live in noonday glare or in midnight darkness? Amid the bleak white of winter, or the green warmth of summer? In the tropics where life is abundant and easy to maintain, or toward the poles where it is precarious and embattled? How could we answer him truly except by pointing out that in a world of successive times and seasons and varied conditions like our own, his sharp dilemmas simply do not fit the two-sided facts? For his inadequate *either . . . ors* we should have to substitute the recurrent *both . . . ands* of the ancient assurance: "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

Suppose then that his curiosity, piqued by our diversified terrestrial environment, should go on to ask questions about the human race itself. Is it composed of a fair sex in colorful variety of costume and cos-

metics, or of males shorn and conventionalized into drab uniformity? Of fresh-faced youth, or wrinkled gray heads, or shining bald heads? Is its characteristic occupation strenuous labor, serious discussion, idle chatter, or deathlike sleep? Is its inner life one of joy or sorrow? Are its ruling motives commendable or unworthy? Is its final accomplishment satisfaction or disappointment, success or failure? The plain facts as we all know them refuse to be impaled upon the horns of any such dilemmas. The only adequate answer to his questions would have to be an inclusive *both . . . and.*

If our visitor be a Martian philosopher, and seek out the thinkers of our race to propound some deeper questions, he will be likely to receive similar answers to problems yet more fundamental. Mind and matter, body and soul, appearance and reality, reason and experience, the knower and the known, the one and the many—how steadily has every attempt to reduce the universe to either one of these contrasting aspects broken down in the face of the two-sided facts. How constantly have the reality and the importance of both aspects forced them-

selves upon us, even when we can least understand or explain their interrelation.

Reality as a whole may therefore not inaptly be likened to a sphere, both sides of which are equally real and may be quite different, but can in any case never be seen by the same observer at the same time. Here we come upon a true *either . . . or* dilemma—though it is such only for the individual and the moment in question. He must choose which of the two hemispheres he will concentrate his attention upon at the time, for he can no more examine both at once than the sun can illuminate both sides of the earth at once. But this inevitable limitation must never be allowed to bisect reality either for our thinking or our living, any more than it obliterates the shadowed and sleeping half of the earth. We must always insist on going round to "see the other side."

The effects of this limitation are, of course, not serious when both sides of the sphere are identical. But if it be a globe representing the earth we live on, or even the total range of our human capacities and experience, then the situation becomes quite different. Plenty of American citizens, like

most of the newspapers they read, keep their attention and consequently their knowledge concentrated almost exclusively upon our own Western Hemisphere, and indeed upon our own immediate foreground in it; as does, for that matter, our whole Occidental world. But meanwhile events much more important for humanity and for history as a whole may be going forward in the Orient that lies in the shadow of our ignorance and indifference. All of us as individuals, or indeed as a generation, may easily and unconsciously limit our outlook on life, or our experience of it, to certain phases valid and valuable enough in themselves, but no more so than certain others which our predecessors may likewise have overemphasized, but which our modern world neglects or ignores. The only remedy for such one-sidedness, which may so easily settle into provinciality, is the deliberate effort to "go and see." Only so can the real dilemma involved in the inevitable limitations of our individual and contemporary point of view be transcended by longer and larger experience and outlook, until what seemed at first an *either . . . or* is gathered up into a more inclusive *both . . . and.*

These lectures are an attempt thus to enlarge our outlook on religion, and on the relation of religion to the rest of life. The conviction has grown upon me through many years that religion, at least as much as any other major human interest, has suffered serious injury upon the horns of false dilemmas that have been thrust upon it by inaccurate thinking or inadequate experience. Every generation has its roving bands of theological gunmen, who pursue the adventurous seeker after larger truth or fuller life, and at the point of some catechism of their own formulation demand from him a yes-or-no answer, on peril of his religious good name or on threat to his spiritual life. It is a real protection in many such theological hold-ups to discover how often the gun is loaded with a false dilemma that misses fire when tested.

Far more valuable, however, than such theological self-defense is the spiritual enrichment which comes to those who venture out on the assurance of Jesus that his spirit will guide into all truth and into life more abundant, through the personal discovery that such inner enlargement is the result, not of processes of subtraction or division,

but of experiences of addition and multiplication. The "Expanding Horizons" toward which my beloved predecessor in this lectureship has been our expert guide, stretch out on both sides of us, and the widening ranges they include can only be explored by those who are ready to follow in both directions. We "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" far faster when we stretch our minds and hearts to say *both . . . and*, than when we shut ourselves up to the rigid limitations of an *either . . . or*.

Before we drop our sphere as a working symbol, it may help us to grasp yet more firmly two principles that are fundamental to these lectures. The first is what German thinkers have called the *polarity* of truth. Like a sphere, reality as we come to know it proves very often to have two aspects or poles which seem at first sight antithetical or contradictory, but which a larger knowledge later discovers to be equally valid or indeed complementary. The other has been memorably described and analyzed by Prof. W. E. Hocking of Harvard as "the principle of *alternation*."[1] If we are to

[1] "The Meaning of God in Human Experience," by W. E. Hocking. Yale University Press, publishers.

comprehend (that is, to hold together in our knowledge) the entire sphere, we must study it first from one side and then from the other. Reality is not given to us in two dimensions simply, like a painting on the wall—though even that is best observed in different lights: it is in three dimensions, like the Venus de Milo down its long corridor in the Louvre, or the Saint Gaudens Lincoln in our Chicago park. Such masterpieces must be viewed alternately from different aspects, if their full significance and beauty are to be realized.

Here too we may note a fact about the discovery of truth in any realm, which is frequently forgotten until its obviousness is once more pointed out. It is the familiar difficulty of proving a negative. I well remember across the years Sir Oliver Lodge's striking statement of it in a scientific lecture. Trust the report of a child, he said, on any positive assertion that lies within the range and competence of the child's personal experience; but distrust even an expert when he begins to indulge in sweeping negations. For instance, a child may truly say, without having read any play of Shakespeare, that a certain word occurs in

his pages; he may have opened a volume at random and found the word under his finger. But it is risky for even a Shakespearean scholar, familiar with every one of the plays, to make the sweeping assertion that a certain word nowhere appears in Shakespeare; to justify that negative he or some other specialist must have gone through every page and every line with that particular word in mind. Give due weight therefore to the discoveries even of a child; but suspect the negations even of an expert. To put it in terms of our globe: an American child may credibly report what he has discovered to be the fact in his own home or his native town; but even his teacher would best not be too dogmatic about the Orient which he has never visited, or for that matter about any realm of human experience which he has not personally explored.

But though our symbolic sphere may have helped us thus far in understanding the point of view of these lectures, it cannot serve us much further. It is too inelastic, too inorganic, to be adequate as a symbol for the realities with which we are primarily concerned. In a word, it is not *alive.* To be sure, this earth of ours has a double mo-

tion, spinning on its own axis and swinging meanwhile around the sun. The modern doctrine of relativity, little as most of us claim to understand its mysteries, has made us more chary than ever of dogmatic dilemmas or denials as to what can or must happen in so complex a physical universe as this. The very spinning of the earth which makes our day and night, its orderly orbit around the sun which makes our summer and winter, suggest that the principle of alternation of which we were just thinking may perhaps correspond to some rhythm in the very nature of things that presents reality to us most fully in a cosmic *both . . . and.*

But these are lectures on religion, not on astro-physics. They have to do with our capacities as living beings, as human personalities. In the realm of life the dangers of the false dilemma and the essential importance of the inclusive view are all the more marked. Modern science, for instance, discovers that our human heritage has come down to us from the sea and the soil through the animal and the savage. In the language of the hymn, it finds us indeed—

"Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail."

But at the same time our human experience discloses within ourselves capacities to analyze and predict the movements of the earth and the stars in their courses, to review and interpret the long drama of human history, to recognize and indeed to create the beautiful and the good, to establish a personal relationship of give-and-take with the Sum of Things. Again in religious phrase, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." Vistas like these behind us and before us, each valid in its own direction, will hardly disclose themselves fully to any such near-sighted and one-sided point of view as that of an *either . . . or.*

All this is plain matter of familiar fact when we deal with personalities. Who of us does not know men and women who are bundles of contradiction—which of us is not one such himself? Principal Sir George Adam Smith once said in a lecture on the Old Testament that Jacob was typical of Orientals then and since in his strange mixture of self-seeking and sensuality with spiritual insight—his feet in the mire, his head among the stars. Those of us who

read E. M. Forster's "A Passage to India," still more those of us who have lived even a little while in the Orient, will feel the force of his remark. But does it apply exclusively to Orientals? Among our own neighbors and friends are those whose "polarities" of personality, even if not so extreme, are hardly less obvious. Hard-headed business men and cool-headed professional men suddenly reveal themselves on a golf course or a fishing trip as still irrepressible boys; it is a familiar observation that you do not really know a man until you have played with him—or a woman until you have traveled with her. A university community discovers some of its most eminent mathematicians and scientists to be lovers and even makers of music on a Sunday evening—and on Christmas Eve to be children at heart. Sensitive little women surprise us with their shrewd strategy and wills of iron when their social ideals or their children's welfare are at stake. The mathematician Lewis Carroll takes not only children but adults into Wonderland with Alice; and a professor of that "dismal science," political economy, Stephen Leacock, makes the whole English-speaking world laugh with him at its own

foibles. What strike us at first as logical incompatibilities thus prove actually to coexist in real people whom we know: they are not to be comprehended by an *either . . . or*, but only by a *both . . . and.*

In the presence of familiar facts like these we can better understand Emerson's deep insight: "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds. . . . With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do." Here too we are reminded of the penetrating observation of more recent thinkers, that a man is great according as he is able to unite and reconcile in himself qualities which in lesser men appear as separate or even contradictory. Thus, as Herbert Croly pointed out in "The Promise of American Life," Abraham Lincoln united in one full-rounded personality the clear and luminous intellect, the sensitive sympathies and magnanimous spirit, and the firm tenacious will, that in other men fall apart and seem mutually exclusive. A reviewer in the British *New Statesman*, writing on a recent edition of Beethoven's letters, makes these significant comments on the greatest of composers:

> Beethoven's letters represent many, but not all, sides of a man who was unusually fickle, changea-

ble, and hard to focus; they throw a fitful light on a strange personality of whom no biographer or commentator has ever yet succeeded in giving a satisfactory portrait. Although slovenly in his dress and his correspondence, he could take immense pains. . . . His notebooks have long been witness to the prolonged labor he spent on composition. Yet he was one of the greatest of improvisers. But Beethoven was consistent in nothing. . . . The measure of his greatness is that he stretched from pole to pole.

It must not be concluded from all this that every dilemma is a false one, or that life never faces us with real *either . . . ors*. There are plenty of such "living, forced, and momentous options," as William James called them. Two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time—as every automobile accident proves once more: one must yield place to the other. Nor can any auto move in opposite directions at once—unless it break in two: its driver must choose which way he will go. But when once these elemental necessities are recognized, the alternatives before us may multiply faster than our realization of them. "Dere am two roads," said the colored preacher whose evangelistic fervor outran his theological accuracy. "One leads to hell an' de other

to eternal damnation." "Well, den," audibly concluded one of his hearers, "dis nigger takes to de woods."

The story well illustrates the ease with which false dilemmas arise out of confused thinking or inaccurate statement—out of a formulation of a given situation in terms that do not correspond to the realities in the case. "Have you left off beating your wife?" was the famous question with which ancient logicians used to embarrass devoted husbands: the flaw in it really lay not in the habits of the husbands but in the formulation of the inquisitors. Like many a theological catechism of to-day, the question could not be truly answered with either yes or no; not because of any unwillingness on the part of the husband to tell the truth, but because the false dilemma proposed by the questioner carried on both its horns implications that simply did not fit the real facts in the case. Words, and still more ways of thinking, that have been outgrown by the realities of enlarging experience until an inadequacy or unreality has appeared in them of which one party to a discussion may be quite unaware, are thus a fruitful source of dilemmas that may seem real enough to

that party, but utterly false to the other. Such false dilemmas turn up far more frequently in the ruts of rigid thinking, and the narrow sectors of a limited outlook on life, than in the complex realities of our wide-horizoned universe. Hence the acute observation of a recent writer on education, that "a man is known by the *dilemmas* that he keeps." Even more penetrating is the remark of one university professor about another, that no real problem in life is so simple as his solutions usually seem to imply.

The consequences of all this for religion are both numerous and important. Since religion deals with men as personalities, and in many of its forms personalizes the universe itself or the Power behind it as God, it will hardly escape those diversities which are characteristic of personalities at their richest and best; and it will be likely to get farthest by taking an experimental and practical rather than a rigidly logical attitude toward life. And since all its highest disclosures have come through great personalities rather than in ordered systems of thought, it is likely to discover new areas

in its own amplitude and new treasures in its own richness more quickly and surely by the use of the two- or three-dimensioned *both . . . and*, than with the rigid foot rule of a one-sided *either . . . or*.

It follows at once that most of us do well deliberately to supplement our own limited personal experience and knowledge in these matters. What we often call our own "angle" on religion is inevitably a limited and very often a narrow angle, and will have to be widened to include other points of view than our own, if we are to take in very much of the larger whole. William James, in discussing the large place of the neurotic temperament in the history of religion, has given us a classic reminder of the limitations inherent in temperament itself:

> No one organism can possibly yield to its owner the whole body of truth. Few of us are not in some way infirm or even diseased; and our very infirmities help us unexpectedly. . . . What then is more natural than that this temperament should introduce one to regions of religious truth, to corners of the universe, which your robust Philistine type of nervous system, forever offering its biceps to be felt, thumping its breast, and thanking Heaven that it hasn't a single morbid fibre in

its composition would be sure to hide forever from its self-satisfied possessors?[2]

Not only our individual temperaments, but our limited experience of life, will require such supplementation. The more I deal with the religious difficulties of students, the more reason I find to believe that while they may spring largely from the inevitable outgrowing of childish religious ideas which have cost the race also severe growing pains, that very process of "growing up" can hardly be complete until it includes at least some of the "great essential experiences of human life" such as love and parenthood, personal and social responsibilities, temptation and repentance, the facing of failure and tragedy and death. Most of these lie beyond, or rather before, even our precocious younger generation; and it is in the stress of such deeper experiences, still more in the effort to meet them worthily, that religion breathes its native air. It is far better exemplified and understood out on the firing-lines of human life than in its

[2] Reprinted from "Varieties of Religious Experience," by William James, by permission of the publishers, Longmans, Green Co.

laboratories and classrooms—and still less from its arm-chairs.

All this holds of generations hardly less than of individuals. No doubt every generation finds it easy to think of its own attainments as "the last word and the final good"; but none perhaps has been so ready to look down upon those that have gone before, and especially the one just preceding, as has been our own. In a recent essay "On the Present Inflation of Literary Values," Richard Le Gallienne has spoken some plain words yet wholesome for twentieth-century ears—and heads:

> "The Inflation of All Contemporary Values" would perhaps be a juster heading for this complaint, for the inflation of literary values is, after all, but a subdivision of that colossal megalomania which, so far, is the one and only really great achievement of the twentieth century. No doubt preceding centuries have thought well of themselves, but none of them can compare in arrogant self-assertion with these braggart Nineteen-Hundreds. The joke of the thing too is that the present century has not allowed itself time enough for that achievement which one usually expects to forerun and justify such self-congratulation. Whatever its potentialities, it is yet too young to have had a chance to do very much. But there, of course, it

is characteristically "futurist." It does not bother about achievement. It "announces" itself the greatest of all centuries on the strength of its own overweening self-confidence, and crowns itself on its "promise," leaving its performance to catch up. Perhaps, like many young persons, it does not feel the need of performance. Its own belief in itself, and its "manifest destiny," is enough. In this comfortable assurance, it looks down contemptuously on all previous centuries and with particular scorn on that from whose loins it has so recently sprung. . . .

Either the standards by which we have been accustomed to judge greatness and distinction in literature must be abandoned, or it is necessary bluntly to say that so far the twentieth century has produced no great writer and no great book in any land; nor even any new writer of conspicuous talent. There is an abundance of imitative skill both in prose or verse, much dilettante experiment, much pretentious affectation.[3]

This is not at all to deny the achievements of our own generation in the realm of science and in the control that it has made possible over the physical world; nor is it to limit these achievements to that realm alone. But the cost of such achievement in any realm is usually some blindness or oversight or one-sidedness toward aspects

[3]*The New Statesman*, January 8, 1927.

of life for which earlier generations had marked capacity. The simple-heartedness of the Middle Ages and the Puritan seriousmindedness, whatever their limitations in other respects, are not wholly to be despised by a generation as double-minded and cleverly cynical as our own—master of an immediate technique, but utterly at sea as to its ultimate standards and ideals, "going nowhere at sixty miles an hour," and beginning now to wonder whether any destination is worth going to at all.

Races as well as generations have need to beware of the false dilemma, and to learn to say *both . . . and.* Those of us who have recently stayed long enough in the Orient to catch some glimpses of our own Anglo-Saxon race "as others see us," will never again be able to list up our unquestioned assets without some debit entry of racial complacency and arrogance. In matters spiritual at least we of the West have little enough to be conceited about—as those who have read "The Christ of the Indian Road," or talked frankly since the war with intelligent Orientals, will understand. A highly trained representative of another race, that has known us even longer and at closer

range, writing recently on the contribution of his own people to the sum of human welfare and achievement, has pointedly remarked: "Let us suppose that the Negro should be satisfied with equaling the Anglo-Saxon in his religious attainments, the resulting spiritual poverty would be appalling." Speaking for the moment as a Christian minister, I find frequent occasion to remind myself that on the whole the two living men known to me who seem to me most truly Christian—judged by that fruitage in quality of life which Jesus himself declared to be his own sole standard—are the one a Hindu, the other a Jew.

Least of all can the Christian church afford to impoverish itself with false *either . . . ors.* We individualistic, sect-ridden Americans, who have worshiped for generations with our own social group and theological point of view alone, have missed something deep and precious that underlies the old word "catholic"; something that Paul was deliberately aiming at when he wrote to his Ephesian fellow-Christians:

> That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.[4]

It is only in fellowship "with all saints," in what the Apostles' Creed discerningly calls "the holy catholic church, the communion of saints," that we can hope to know that fullness of the divine life in man which indeed passes the knowledge of any single individual or group or race or generation. Toward that fullness every individual and group and race and generation has something distinctive and characteristic to contribute. It is therefore one of the real glories of the Christian church universal that it has been from its earliest days, and is now more than ever before, a spiritual fellowship uniting all ages and both sexes, of differing theological views and temperamental characteristics, from many groups and races and generations, in one household of faith in Christ, in whom "all things hold together."[5] It is a stream flowing down the centuries so broad and deep that it can only be spanned by a double arch—*both . . . and.*

---

[4] Ephesians 3: 17–19.

[5] Colossians 1: 17, A. R. V. margin.

# CHAPTER II

## THINGS NEW AND OLD

"If . . . we look at the essential characteristics of the Whig and Tory, we may consider each of them as the representative of a great principle, essential to the welfare of nations. One is, in an especial manner, the guardian of liberty, and the other, of order. One is the moving power, and the other the steadying power of the state. One is the sail, without which society would make no progress; the other the ballast, without which there would be small safety in the tempest."

MACAULAY: ESSAY ON "THE EARL OF CHATHAM." ALLYN AND BACON, PUBLISHERS.

## CHAPTER II

### THINGS NEW AND OLD

My title you will at once recognize as a phrase of Jesus; and some of you will recall the little parable from which it is taken. "Every scribe who hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."[1] Those of us who roughed it through Palestine on horseback in the primitive pre-war days find ourselves speculating as to a possible fuller spoken form of Jesus' parable, of which this single sentence sounds like a written condensation. Is the Syrian householder suddenly called on to provide a meal for an unexpected guest? Then the treasures of food which he will bring forth will certainly include some things that are old: dried fruits and nuts, grains from some previous harvest, old wines perhaps, and sweets long since prepared. No less certainly, however, will the meal include some things that are new: milk and eggs that are

[1]Matthew 13: 52, A. R. V.

hardly cool, and perhaps a fresh-killed chicken or even a fatted calf for so special an occasion. Or is the entertainment after dinner? Then out of the household treasure will come brasses and coins and rugs that are old family heirlooms; along with a new Damascus blade, and the latest novelty from Cairo or Rome. "Things new and old"—*both . . . and.*

Nor is it otherwise when the modern hostess entertains her friends. The table is decked with the old family linen and silver —but with fresh flowers. It is loaded with olives and spices, preserved fruits and potatoes and bread from some previous harvest: but woe to the dinner party if the meat, and especially the milk and the eggs, are not fresh! In the after-dinner conversation appears the same constant blend of diversities: well-seasoned coffee and cigars, along with equally well-seasoned platitudes and anecdotes—what would a dinner party be without some stories heard for the twentieth time? But it will be a dull evening indeed if it is not enlivened by an occasional fresh flash of wit, or if some one does not "start something" with an unexpected opinion. "Things new and old."

In these familiar situations there appear both poles of reality in a living and therefore a changing world. Life itself is the incessant transformation of a persistent history inherited from the past, through a fresh experience in the living present, to create a future which will in its turn be not quite the same as either past or present. We can never truly understand or richly share in this perpetual process and constant flux, unless we recognize in it *both* past history *and* present experience, both the old and the new—each of them indispensable, and neither of them final.

Our physical bodies are such living links between past and future. If any of you had known a certain Maine sea-captain who has been in his grave these twenty years and more, you would recognize in the profile and Yankee twang of his grandson certain features of face and voice much older than I am; and you would see some of them emerging again already in his small great grandson. And yet this same body, thus reminiscent of the past, is so utterly dependent upon "newness of life" that without a fresh heartbeat and a fresh breath I cannot finish this present sentence. The physiologists

tell us that all our living cells rebuild and thus renew themselves completely within a surprisingly short time, so that within a few years our bodies become substantially new and essentially different from what they were before—while all the time they keep an unbroken continuity and a real identity with their own past. If at any time one of these bodies loses its power to adjust to and renew itself in the changing present, and becomes simply a survival of the past, it is dead; and though it may persist for a time before dissolution, the sooner it is buried the better. It has a past, but no real future.

So is it also with our living minds. I can close my eyes and see in vivid memory the deserts of Arabia, the glaciers of Alaska, the summits of the Himalayas. But meanwhile the same mind that can thus recall the experiences of years long past is just now creating out of these experiences and reflections of long ago new trains of thought—this very sentence in fact—the conclusion of which it cannot exactly foresee, but only work its laborious way toward, one step at a time. Leave out of this lecture or this sentence what has thus been sifted and tested and worked out through a long past,

and neither is worth your attention. It may have an ephemeral existence, but it has no solid foundation, and therefore no permanent value.

One sentence out of my college work in psychology comes back to me time and again like a revealing flash, sometimes in dark hours of perplexity, now and then in the gloom of what seems like tragedy. I think it sheds light on this matter also. "The present moment is always dark." The narrower we make the span of this present *now*, the darker and poorer it becomes. It draws its real richness from the past which fills it with meaning, and the future which gives it the expectancy of an opening door. It is the narrow neck of an hourglass through which time pours the rich accumulation of the past in the thin trickle of the instant present to build up the unknown future. Take any word of this sentence by itself, and how bare it seems until it joins itself to all the words that have gone before, and becomes thus a link leading to all the conclusions that are to follow. How little meaning any sentence in this lecture has until it is set into the linkage of our consecutive and coöperative thinking. The

biological sciences have taught us that we do not really understand any living organism until we know how it has come to be what it is, and have observed what it is becoming. This is not less true in the realms of history, morals, and religion; in all dealing with ideas and with values. "History is bunk," thought a mechanical genius once: only to find how wrong he was when he tried to stop a great war. The present is one link only in a long chain. The link by itself avails little; but the chain, with length enough to reach solid anchorage below, and scope enough to ride the waves of sudden storms above, will hold a great ship in calm and storm alike.

The Roman deity Janus, with his two faces looking opposite ways, has been remembered by our modern world chiefly as a warning against the "Janus-faced" attitude of Bunyan's Mr. Facing-both-ways of the Town of Fair-speech. Of two-facedness in this time-serving sense we do well to beware. But there are plenty of situations in actual life in which the old god of gateways and entrances symbolizes for us the only attitude which can adequately meet their problems, and especially their crises. Fac-

ing backward until we understand how, the situation has come about, and what enduring elements and values it contains; and then forward into the future into which all this material must be recast: so through all our lives

"We look before and after."

And if that other human capacity, with which Shelley himself was so poignantly endowed, to

"Pine for what is not,"

is ever to become creatively efficient as well as emotionally intense, this combination of an intelligent and sympathetic retrospect with the forward look of constructive and courageous initiative will be the more necessary.

All this is as true for patriotism and politics as for religion. Our own country has been echoing of late with the shouts of vociferous patriots insisting that one hundred per cent Americanism is the solution for all our national problems; but it is perhaps characteristic that few of them, or indeed of us, have taken the time or trouble to inquire what Americanism is. The im-

plicit assumption of a great deal of this noisy patriotism is that true Americanism consists in the preservation intact, at worst, of the traditional prejudices and preferences of our own group or sect or race toward other groups with whom our contacts have been multiplied—at best, of the social and political traditions and habits bequeathed to us by the infallible wisdom of the "founding fathers." Such patriotism exhausts itself in enthusiasm for all that is old in American life, but has no interest or even room for new expressions of the old American spirit in terms of the new conditions and problems of our national life.

To the student of religion it is especially interesting to see emerging in contemporary patriotism a striking analogy to the literalistic document-worship with which he is so familiar in religious history. Large numbers of Americans who would regard it as blind superstition to believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible are now imputing to the Constitution the same dogmatic finality which their ancestors accorded to the Scriptures, and with a fervor almost puritanical are urging familiarity with it through private and public devotion as the very sum

and substance of American patriotism. It is obvious of course that the bibliolatry of many of these orthodox patriots does not quite reach the "from cover to cover" of theological Fundamentalism, but stops somewhere short of the guarantees of free speech and of the Eighteenth Amendment, both of which somehow missed the verbal inspiration which they humbly recognize and implicitly obey in the rest of the Constitution. It implies not the slightest lack of reverence or gratitude for either the Constitution or the Bible, to recall in this connection the great words of Paul, uttered at a crisis in the age-long tension between rigid literalism and creative experience in religion, and full of meaning for every area of human life: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." True Americanism, as Theodore Roosevelt loved to insist, is a living spirit: contagiously exemplified in the fathers as they met the problems of their day; but always requiring reincarnation in each new generation, as it faces forward to meet the changing conditions and different problems of its own new day.

This combination of reverence for the old with readiness for the new has perhaps

never been better stated in its political application than by George Washington in his Farewell Address. He speaks with equal force to those numerous Americans who claim the right to choose which of our constitutional provisions they shall recognize as binding, and those others, only less numerous, who assume that "the last word and the final good" were declared unto mankind in 1787:

> This government, the offspring of your own choice, uninfluenced and unawed, adopted upon full investigation and mature deliberation, completely free in its principles, in the distribution of its powers, uniting security with energy and containing within itself a provision for its own amendment, has a just claim to your confidence and your support. Respect for its authority, compliance with its laws, acquiescence in its measures are duties enjoined by the fundamental maxims of true liberty. The basis of our political system is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government. But the Constitution which at any time exists, till changed by the explicit and authentic act of the people, is sacredly obligatory upon all.

It is doubtless part of our human limitation, not only that we cannot see both poles of a sphere at once, but that we are all

temperamentally more sensitive and responsive to one of these two aspects of life than to the other. We shall always have among us, in matters political, social, and artistic, as well as religious, those whose mental foreground is filled by the appreciation and preservation of valuable things that are old. We shall likewise always have among us, in every realm of life, those whose minds and hearts are kindled by the discovery and application of valuable things that are new. The former, conservatives as we usually call them, will naturally be more numerous among the older generation; the latter, progressives as we say, among the younger. But this difference in outlook is, as we all know, far more a matter of type of mind and resiliency of temperament than of mere numerical age. Remembering Sir Oliver Lodge's wise observation that most men are much more to be trusted in their assertions than in their negations, we shall do well to listen carefully to both conservative and progressive, as long as each is reporting what he has found of value on his own side of the sphere; but we shall do equally well to suspect the sweeping denials either of the reactionary or of the radical,

as to the presence and the value of things that lie hidden from his eyes in shadow on the other side.

Such deliberate comprehensiveness of view is particularly important for religion in days of rapid transition in theological thinking and in social and spiritual experience like those in which we are living. All of us who "profess and call ourselves Christians"—and especially we younger men—need the help of the conservative in realizing the value of a spiritual heritage that has made us rich in our own right. Through all its long history Christianity has made itself

> "the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time."

It was the direct descendant of the Hebrew prophets; enlarged its horizon and stabilized itself by its interchanges with Greek, medieval, and modern philosophy; and will yet clarify its thinking and improve its technique under the influence of modern science. Its Bible, understood and interpreted by different generations in different ways, has proved itself an unfailing source of spiritual life and power for different ages and races alike. Its institutions and ceremonies have

grown solemn with the dignity of the slow centuries, and weighty with that deeper wisdom that often lingers when knowledge comes too rapidly for full assimilation into life. Its special treasures of spiritual experience and social self-sacrifice have been steadily enriched by

> "all the saints who from their labors rest,
> Who Thee by faith before the world confessed."

It is a stream fed from many sources, enriched by many tributaries, flowing across the centuries and the continents in widening scope and deepening volume. Every Christian who is "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven" will be able to bring forth out of his treasure things that are *old.*

Such a sense for the values that have been tested by long human experience will help to carry our own younger generation beyond and beneath the shallowness and superficial cleverness that are characteristic of modern life at so many points, and not least of modern religion. In our violent rebound from traditionalism and authoritarianism in religion—a reaction not only inevitable but wholesome—we may easily swing to the opposite extreme and make the equal mis-

take of thinking that nothing true or valuable was discovered before 1900, or published before the first issue of the *American Mercury*. An ultra-modern may be just as provincial as any reactionary and just as blindly dogmatic as any orthodox theologian —with perhaps even less of human experience beneath his cocksureness. "No one who is merely a creature of his own times is really educated," says Everett Dean Martin in his "Meaning of a Liberal Education."[2] Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick put the same truth into memorable figures in his inaugural address as a professor at Union Theological Seminary:

> A man of catholic culture knows how to be at home in all ages, to appreciate wisdom and spiritual quality in all forms of thought; he drinks the water of life from Greek vases and Jewish waterjars as well as from modern faucets; and whoever lacks such culture robs himself of his racial inheritance of experience and truth.

It is surely significant to find Dr. Fosdick, the foremost spokesman of liberal and progressive religion in our own time, to whom the younger generation listens as to no other

[2] "Meaning of a Liberal Education," by Everett Dean Martin. W. W. Norton & Company, publishers.

preacher, emphasizing in the same address, with words still more vivid and revealing, the profundity and adequacy of Christianity in this regard:

> As one listens to our modern, liberal preaching, how lamentably inadequate it is! Its message too often is thinly contemporary; much of its truth sprang up last night like Jonah's gourd and will as quickly wither again. Its pronouncements, for all their cleverness and altruism, sound like happy ideas that lately popped into the preacher's head. It reminds one of nothing so much as a shallow, surface pool, representative only of the rain that fell yesterday. The great preachers of the Church have not been so. Their preaching, like the sea, has represented the accumulation of innumerable rains, has been fed from exhaustless nether wells, and has come rolling in with catholic majesty and power, when the sky called to the tide. Whenever men have preached like that, they have gone back to the Scriptures for their inspiration. Those who listened to them have heard articulate in their message the long, racial experience of the heart of man with the living God. They had behind their words the length and breadth and depth and height of man's spiritual history.

But while we thus need and welcome the emphasis of the conservative on the value of some things in religion that are old, we

must never let him overstate his case until it becomes the reactionary's sweeping denial of the constant presence and value in all vital religion of elements that are new. The prophets of the Lord in every generation have had to break through the crust of custom, clear away the fallen leaves of dead tradition, and then drag their incredulous contemporaries by sheer moral force to see and taste the living spring. Jesus, saying with eyes that must have flashed and voice that must have rung, "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, . . . but *I* say unto you"; Paul, crying "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"; John upon Patmos, beholding the holy city as the completion of God's creative purpose, and hearing out of it the voice of God saying, "Behold, I make all things new"—these are one and all teachers "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven," bringing forth out of their treasure things that are *new*. Nor has their succession of surprise and originality ceased unto this present hour. It is not alone the prophets of what we in the West call the social gospel, whose ears are open, and who are

opening our eyes and hearts, to the contemporary voice and will of God for our own generation The most earnest and impressive religious group whom I met as Barrows Lecturer in India was a little company of young Ahmadiyya Moslems in Lahore, some of whose fellows in Afghanistan had already paid for their missionary zeal by death from stoning as heretics at the hands of the orthodox. They went straight out to convert me to their own faith. When I asked them what was its distinctive feature, their answer was that Allah was not a dead God of long ago, and that he had not finished speaking with the Koran. They felt themselves custodians of new treasures of religious experience which they wanted to share with me.

It is these two permanent elements in religion, the old in its heritage from the past, and the new in its present experience and changed relationships, that are constantly thrust upon us in contemporary theological discussion as the horns of a dilemma, between which we must choose. The question whether it is a true or a false dilemma will finally depend upon our understanding of the nature of religion itself. If we think of religion as a fixed deposit of doctrine to be

preserved unchanged and undiminished, like so much water or sand or even gold; or as an institution inherited from authoritative antiquity, like some ancient candlestick of elaborate and classical design; or—in the striking figure actually used by a rabbi of Jesus's time to state his own religious ideal —as a water-tight cistern which holds every drop of water accumulated from days gone by: then in the nature of the case what is new is inferior or invalid, and the dilemma between old and new is a true one. But if on the other hand Jesus was right when he pictured religion as a spring of living water, then the dilemma is a false one. A spring is both old and new: in the same spot where men have drunk for centuries, there is fresh supply bubbling forth this very instant to quench this moment's thirst. If there is even partial validity in the characteristic modern cry for "more of the divine fire and less of the ecclesiastical candlestick," it is because that fire does descend unexpectedly and kindle an enduring flame in less pretentious places; and because even the most elaborate candlestick becomes a mere antique without the presence of a living flame. Think of religion as essentially doc-

trine or institution, and the sharp horns of an *either . . . or* choice between new and old begin to appear. Experience religion as a way of living, and like all life that we know anywhere, it is at once both old and new.

We may realize more fully both the inevitability and the richness of this two-sided fact about religion, if we remember that religion is given to men *both* as a social heritage and as a personal experience. This double aspect of religion, as at once history and experience, appears plainly enough in the Christian celebration of the Lord's Supper. It is characteristic that some religious bodies should see and emphasize one side of the shield, and some the other. Many, if not most, of the Protestant churches see in the communion chiefly a solemn memorial of certain tragic events in a memorable life lived long ago: a kind of living monument more permanent and legible through the centuries than any granite shaft could be. "This do in remembrance of me"—and who in all human history has ever had a memorial so age-long and world-wide? But meanwhile the Episcopal, Lutheran, and Catholic churches have emphasized, as part of the very essence of the

sacrament, something much more contemporary and indispensable than a mere memorial of long ago; it is a present means of grace, an act and experience vitally related to religion here and now. Those of us who find intellectually impossible their formulations of this faith into doctrines of transubstantiation or Real Presence or even sacramental indispensability, have to admit nevertheless that our simple memorial would never have maintained itself through so many generations *simply* as a memorial, unless at the same time it had ministered to the contemporary spiritual needs of living men and women. The Lord's Supper is indeed a golden chain stretching back across the centuries to a beloved hand in an upper room of long ago; but it is no less a symbol of God's perennial provision for our deepest spiritual needs, and a summons to partake thereof afresh. At every Communion we bring forth out of our Christian treasure "things new and old."

What is thus true of one great event in the life of Jesus is hardly less true of his whole life; it likewise has become, not only a fact of history, but a root of living and present experience. In his illuminating

chapter on "Jesus and Religious Authority"[3] Dean Willard L. Sperry has discerningly analyzed and evaluated the attempt of the fact-finding nineteenth century to get "back to Christ," behind the mists and dust and creeds of the centuries that have so much obscured his face. "The recovery of the Jesus of history in something of his original integrity will remain the outstanding achievement of the religious mind of the last hundred years." But when once "the task of collection, comparison, codification of facts and texts is over, . . . the task of interpretation begins." Not even scholars, much less plain men, can live very long in the "Valley of Dead Facts," nor can there be much spiritual vitality in the religion of those whom Martineau once called "archæological Christians." The plain man cannot find in the best critical studies of the life of Jesus any decisive answer to the question "What would Jesus do?" under the entirely different conditions of our modern life; he cannot even find any unanimous answer to the question as to just what Jesus did actually do—or say or think. He is

[3] "The Disciplines of Liberty," by W. I. Sperry. Yale University Press, publishers.

thrown back—as vital religion is always and inevitably thrown back—on the interpretation of history by and in terms of present experience. Meanwhile the critic himself, as Schweitzer so ruthlessly pointed out in his "Quest of the Historical Jesus," finds it impossible to paint any purely objective portrait of the Jesus of history. George Tyrrell said "with swift ironic insight" of one of the most "consistent and conscientious" of such modern attempts, "The Christ that Harnack sees looking back through nineteen centuries of Christian dogma is nothing but the reflection of a liberal Protestant face seen at the bottom of a deep well." Every life of Christ on paper or in mind, like every portrait of Christ on canvas or in imagination, thus inevitably reflects the interests and presuppositions and point of view of its author. Truer than the nineteenth-century slogan "Back to Christ" in its theological implications, and deeper in its religious insight and challenge, is therefore the cry of aggressive Christianity in the twentieth century: "Forward with Christ."

Dean Sperry has done a real service by pointing out in his chapter on "History and Dogma" that this necessity of a *both* . . .

*and* synthesis between history and experience is by no means limited to religion. Emerson "roughed out" in his "Essay on History," he says, "the only theory of history which really has any permanent worth": that history itself is only to be understood when it is read as biography and indeed as autobiography—by getting ourselves inside its story, and its story inside ourselves. Even the "certain touch of arrogance" with which Emerson strikes the iron string of Self-Reliance hardly gives forth a more definite note than do Sperry's quotations from two such historians as James Anthony Froude and William Roscoe Thayer on the necessity for any "true reading of history," of "this fearless autobiographical temper." The Christian emphasis on the contemporaneity of "the living Christ" may therefore have much more solid foundation beneath even its apparently more emotional expressions than any mere "dubious mood of mystical piety." It may indeed be such a mood, if it divorce itself deliberately from the historical facts as only the most careful and competent research can discover them; for the working alliance between skilled technique and interpretative

insight is even more necessary for sound religion than for all "true reading of history." But more than any other personality known to human history, Jesus has proved through centuries his creative and continuing power to make of his own words and deeds and life in Palestine long ago, living roots of moral and religious growth and fruitfulness in the experience of countless men and women of other races and generations than his own. Canon Barnett is speaking not only for the central conviction beneath his own life's work in East London, but for Christians of all the centuries, when he says: "Christ is a present Christ, and all of us are his contemporaries."

Let us then turn the sphere of religion round once more for a final glance at both its hemispheres. Religion is given to us first as a *fact in human history.* The great religions of mankind have had their rise, not in some view of life or theory of the universe erected into a system of thought (that comes later by long generations), but rather in the life of some individual founder, who appeared upon our human scene as himself a fact and force of dynamic power.

These religions have flowed down the centuries and across the continents as rivers of influence sprung from such personal sources: Buddha, Moses, Mohammed—and Jesus. As the German theologian Karl Bornhausen puts it in his recent work:

> The rule of life of all religion is that it is delivered; it is not, like philosophy and world views, newly born and newly founded in every age. But its foundations are ancient, and their evidences are in the hands of the begetters, the leading figures of the various religions. Of these there are very few, whose evidence is taken up by ever-new witnesses and borne down the history of religion. But all these witnesses assert that the power of this religion has not arisen in them, but that it has come to them through historical mediation.[4]

As children born into such a racial heritage, most of us come across religion first in the stories of these founders and their followers, the records of their lives, the movements and institutions they have called into being. It is all objective for the moment—a racial datum presented to us also. In this objectivity of religion as a given historical fact lies its perennial protection against the subjectivism and danger of self-delusion

[4]Karl Bornhausen: "Der Erlöser," page 6.

which would beset it were it simply a contemporary and mystical experience. In our own sociologically and psychologically minded days we do well to recall the wise words of the great historian Harnack:[5]

> In the history of intellectual and moral ideas the rough-and-ready way of explaining cause by environment alone breaks down altogether. I admit that even here much may be accounted for in this way, much more than earlier generations suspected: the necessity that drives and compels has often been the mother of progress; and even to-day we can see causes at work, and watch the process of growth. But without the strength and the deed of an individual, of a *personality*, nothing great, nothing that will bring us farther on our way, can be accomplished. Whence comes the strength of the strong, and the deed of the doer? Whence comes it that the knowledge that might advance us, the thought that might save us, is transmitted from one generation to another as barren and worthless and dead as a stone, until some one seizes it and strikes it into fire? Whence comes that higher order of marriage, where a thought so unites with a soul that each is merged in the other, and belongs to the other, and masters the will? Whence comes the courage that conquers the resistance of a dull and unfeeling world?

[5] "Christianity and History," by Adolf von Harnack. The Macmillan Company, publishers.

Whence comes the living power that begets a living conviction?

It is a very limited psychology which fails to see that these are the real levers of history. All that its adherents ask is whether the man has said anything new; and if so, whether it cannot be deduced from something that went before; and they profess themselves content if they ascertain that it was only "relatively" new, and that nothing very wonderful has happened after all. No: not only in the beginning was the Word, the Word that was at once Deed and Life; but the living, resolute, indomitable Word, namely, the *person*, has always been a power in history, along with and above the power of circumstance.

Herein of course lies the great strength of Christianity, as a historical religion sprung from an actual life. It has been well stated by the British philosopher A. N. Whitehead, now teaching at Harvard, in his recent Lowell Lectures:[6]

Christianity has retained the easy power of development. It starts with a tremendous notion about the world. But this notion is not derived from a metaphysical doctrine, but from our comprehension of the sayings and actions of certain supreme lives. It is the genius of the religion to point at the facts and ask for their systematic

[6] "Religion in the Making," by S. G. Smith. The Macmillan Company, publishers.

interpretation. In the Sermon on the Mount, in the Parables, and in their accounts of Christ, the gospels exhibit a tremendous fact. The doctrine may, or may not, lie on the surface. But what is primary is the religious fact.

Thus do the historian and the philosopher put before us that "fact of Christ," now nineteen centuries old, which is one pole of the Christian religion. But most of us encountered it first in far more simple and moving form:

"I think when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How he called little children as lambs to his fold."

And then with characteristic suddenness the familiar children's hymn turns full upon us the other pole of Christianity, and indeed of all vital religion: the personal response which these facts awaken in our own hearts.

"I should like to have been with them then."

The fact in human history has now become a *fact in personal experience;* knowledge is leading to appreciation and affection. Apart from such suffusion of historical facts and social heritage with a personal sense of value and dedication, religion has no real life or

power. In the lecture just quoted, the most famous of German theological scholars says what every religious person knows:[7]

> What holds good of all moral ideas, holds good in the highest sense of religion: it is one thing to be sensible of their truth; it is another to be possessed of their power. We may recognize and acknowledge the claims of the Christian religion and the peace and beauty of the religious life, and yet be quite incapable of raising ourselves to its level. It may hover before our eyes and shine with the radiance of a star, and yet not burn like a fire in our hearts. We may have the keenest sense of the bonds that we would escape, and yet be totally unable to set ourselves free. Not only may we be so—we are so. There is no one who has had this feeling, or who has it again and again, and is delivered from it, but knows that he has been delivered because God has spoken to him. The man who fails to hear the voice of God for himself is without religion. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," is the only form in which a religious life is possible.

Again, however, it is not the thinker but the poet who best states for us the perennial power of vital religion to quicken old facts into new forces, to transform the past tense

---

[7] "Christianity and History," by Adolf von Harnack. The Macmillan Company, publishers.

of its history into the terms of its present experience:

"No fable old, nor mythic lore,
Nor dream of bards and seers,
No dead fact stranded on the shore
Of the oblivious years;

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is He;
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee."[8]

[8] J. G. Whittier: "Our Master."

# CHAPTER III

## PRACTICAL SERVICE AND INNER RENEWAL

"Thus each aspect of human life apart from its alternate becomes a mechanism. And the whole of human existence falls into two phases, work and worship; the domain of duty and the domain of love, respectively. . . .

"Neither phase of the rhythm is justified by itself. Duty has no right over men apart from their religious experience. On the other hand, religion has no right apart from its descent into the world of effort. In reality, in the logical and eternal order of things, these two phases of experience belong together, and in time also are always finding their way together: but in psychological order, in the natural history of the mind, they fall apart, and must be pursued separately. Religion belongs with morals—yet the deeds of religion must alternate with the moral life, and for a time displace it. Religion belongs with all the works of art and science and human betterment—yet it has its own moment which takes away from theirs.

"Any given moment of life must choose between two goods, psychologically incompatible. On the one hand, the peace of the hermit, the silence of the forest, the exaltation of sacrifice, the mightiness of simplification and unity, the joy of self-abandonment, the calm of absolute contemplation, the vision of God. On the other hand, the variety and stress of life, the zest of common ends, the mastery of means, the glory of infinite enterprise, the pride of creativity and self-possession. The modern world as a whole has made its choice. But there is a better choice—namely, the choice of both. For the life of each is that it may lose itself, from time to time, in the life of the other. And this, which is obvious in things partial, is true—and even chiefly true—in things total."

"The Meaning of God in Human Experience," by E. Hocking. Yale University Press, Publishers.

# CHAPTER III

## PRACTICAL SERVICE AND INNER RENEWAL

In one of our magazines there recently appeared some verses which might easily pass for the diary of many American women in our larger centers to-day:

"On Monday she lunched with a Housing Committee,
With statistics and stew she was filled;
Then she dashed to a tea on 'Crime in Our City,'
And dined with a Church Ladies' Guild.

On Tuesday she went to a Babies' Week lunch,
And a tea on 'Good Citizenship';
At dinner she talked to the Trade Union bunch
(There wasn't a date she dared skip).

On Wednesday she managed two annual dinners,
One at noon and the other at night,
On Thursday a luncheon on 'Bootlegging Sinners,'
And a dinner on 'War: Is It Right?'

'World Problems We Face' was her Friday noon date
(A luncheon-address, as you guessed),

And she wielded a fork while a man from
New York
Spoke that evening on 'Social Unrest.'

On Saturday noon she fell in a swoon,
Missed a talk on the youth of our land. . . .
Poor thing, she was through! She never came
to,
But died with a spoon in her hand."

These deliciously satirical stanzas mark the far swing of the pendulum, in our strenuous age and for our motor-minded race, to the utmost limit of activism and practical service, in the name not only of altruism but of religion. We have been telling each other now for almost a generation that what religion needs most in our time is to wake up and get busy. We have had enough and too much indeed (at least we think our fathers had too much) of idle meditation, passive devotion, and submissive prayer. We remind each other constantly that our ancestors, in the days of their ignorance and superstition, accepted plagues and even poverty as "acts of God," slums and wars as divine institutions, and the evils of life as irremediable necessities. Only a century ago pious folk objected to the railroad be-

cause God never meant men to travel twenty miles an hour, and to anæsthetics because they interfered with His punishment of pain in childbirth inflicted upon Eve and all her daughters in Eden!

All of which may indeed have been a prevalent religious attitude once upon a time—but we moderns have certainly had an extreme reaction from it. We have found not only our social duty but our personal religion in keeping everlastingly busy doing good. Quoting the parables of the Good Samaritan and the Last Judgment to our purpose, and honoring Martha as our patron saint, we have interpreted Christianity as an urgent social imperative, rather than as in any profound sense a "gospel." As Dean Sperry suggests, the cup of cold water has become our characteristic modern sacrament, and the heart of our newest humanism has been summarized by one of its most earnest evangelists as "The kingdom of God is up to us."

Now this quick and far swing of the spiritual pendulum is surely in large part a wholesome reaction from the morbid introspection, the measureless sentimentality, the futile otherworldliness, and above all the

unconscious self-centeredness, of much of the evangelicalism in which so many of us were brought up. That its emphasis on fruits rather than on moods has had abundant precedent and authorization in the practice and teaching of Jesus, is plain to any clear-eyed reader of the New Testament. Its faith that science can banish other plagues as it has already banished yellow fever and drawn the fangs of smallpox and diphtheria, and that persistent and intelligent good will can abolish war and assuage poverty, as it has already abolished dueling and slavery and lessened famine, holds the hope of a better world for our children after us. And its concrete immediacy has strongly appealed to our practical-minded, self-sufficient American temper, with its distaste for the profounder problems of human destiny and its boundless readiness to try spiritual patent medicines for its own ills—always provided they are flavored to a pleasant taste and are being taken by plenty of other folk at the same time.

Nevertheless it still remains true that Jesus did *not* conclude his summons to his followers with the verb which our unwritten but widely current "American revised ver-

sion" often substitutes for his own: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; *get busy.*" He directed them to the white harvest field by a somewhat longer and less traveled route, which would bring them to so great a task under more competent direction and with more enduring energies than their own. George Tyrrell has put his finger squarely on the spiritual inadequacies in our impulsive activism: "When all are sufficiently fed, clothed, housed, and tended, the question still remains: What to do with life, a question which they cannot answer to whom philanthropy is the whole of life." And we Americans ought to have enough sense of spiritual humor, as well as enough insight, to enjoy his delightful description of our current definition of Christianity as "Practicality. *Circuibat benefaciendo:* He went about doing good. 'Doing good' seems to be the whole of the matter; more especially that sort of good that involves 'going about.'"

The signs of reaction against such exclusive emphasis on practicality as a social panacea, or as the sum total of religion, begin rapidly to multiply all about us. They

have been implicit all along in the widespread fear of the more conservative who always constitute the great majority of religious people, lest the characteristic modern stress on social serviceability in our church and missionary programs should weaken or indeed replace our proclamation of those elements in evangelical faith and experience which make Christianity essentially a "gospel." We who complain that our fathers fell upon one horn of a dilemma between faith and works, which we insist is a false dilemma, must be all the more careful that in our reaction we do not fall upon the other horn. Even more significant are the straws which already begin to blow about in the company of those who have gone farthest in our modern emphasis on practical service. The appearance in a secular magazine of the poem with which this lecture began, and even more the quick assent with which its implications are received by the very persons whose social conscience is most sensitive and whose social consecration is most complete, suggest that those who have been spending themselves most generously for the common welfare are feeling keenly the need for something more in con-

temporary religion than a hounding social imperative alone. It was a college undergraduate, a representative of the restless younger generation at its best, who said in a recent conference between faculty and students on chapel services, "I may be very queer, but when I go to a religious service what I want most is not to keep getting up and then sitting down, to be kept busy singing or reading or even thinking; what I need is to sit quiet and have a chance to take in and fill up again."

Ten years and more ago, Dean Sperry tells us,[1] a Bampton lecturer at Oxford diagnosed thus one of the frequent spiritual ailments of our time:

> Sometimes a very high degree of practical unselfishness is accompanied by an extreme sense of uselessness and failure. Such external activity for good without conscious enthusiasm, almost without interest, is remarkable; and the account which the actors in the tragedy give of it when questioned is no less remarkable. They explain their perseverance in right action and in the service of others as due, partly to the force of habit, and partly to the imperious need for escaping from brooding thoughts; but stubbornly deny that it

[1] "The Disciplines of Liberty," by W. I. Sperry. Yale University Press, publishers.

has any moral value, either objectively or to their own character. They maintain that their acts are isolated and meaningless, not springing from any guiding principle within, and in turn not producing that feeling of comfort and power which follows on really moral action. . . . I am convinced that the thing is common—far more common, perhaps, than we are inclined to suppose.

It is a complaint which certainly has not become any less frequent or acute during the years since 1918!

It may help us better to understand these widespread social and spiritual symptoms of our time, if we recall one of the most familiar facts about physical health and strength. The human body cannot put forth continuous effort for more than a very limited time, and some degree of alternation between effort and relaxation is necessary if physical energy is to reach its maximum. The muscles of the arm and hand can grip with a certain amount of force for a moment; if then they alternately relax and grip again, this alternation serves up to a certain point as strengthening exercise, and their gripping capacity will steadily increase with such training. But if these same muscles attempt

to hold their grip too long without any relaxation, their power will steadily lessen until finally cramps or loss of control over the overtired muscles will result. Every football fan—even more every coach and trainer—knows not only the uselessness but the danger of keeping the best of players in a hard game after exhaustion has dulled mind and muscle alike. The explanation of all this is that muscular activity itself, involving as it does the consumption of energy and the breakdown of tissue, produces toxic elements which clog the system until they are eliminated, and the wear and tear is repaired, by rest, food, and sleep. The expression "fatigue poisoning" has already begun to pass over from medical parlance into popular speech. While recent physiological research has not identified all the toxic elements thus produced by prolonged muscular exertion, it has already discovered that lactic acid is apparently one such. The healthy life of the body, in short, is not *either* strenuous activity *or* passive recuperation, but *both:* each necessary as the other and that in continual alternation.

All this is not less true of the mind and the nervous system. These are indeed capa-

ble of intense application, and of even more continuous endurance than the muscles, and have a reserve capacity under special strain which is not unlike the runner's "second wind." But sooner or later, after continuous application or prolonged strain, comes the absolute necessity of change, rest, and "break"—or there will be a breakdown. Most of us have learned from our own personal experience some of the elements essential in such mental and nervous "re-creation." Something outside ourselves must take the initiative, so that we can yield ourselves without too much effort to its direction and impulse. This something may be a companion so familiar and congenial that we do not have to carry any social responsibility for either conversation or silence; or a game interesting enough in itself to catch and hold our wearied attention; or music melodious enough to carry us along like a canoe or a leaf on its moving stream; or a play that will "take up our mind" for three hours into a new and different world; or a novel, not too serious, in which we can "lose ourselves." After some one or more of these comes at last the sleep which we could never chase and catch on

our own initiative—into whose soft strong arms we can let ourselves go now like tired children:

"Sleep, that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast."

There is the "feel" of personal experience, as well as the perspective of healthy sanity, in some vivid sentences from Dr. Fosdick:

If a man has ever had insomnia, has courted relaxation as a lover courts a maiden, has chased a quiet mind as boys chase a bit of thistledown that flutters just beyond their straining reach, has sought for the grace of one hour's sleep as men seek for victory in a great battle—then that man knows that while strenuousness may be in the foreground of life, rest is in the background. And lacking the power to rest, nothing else matters.

All this makes the question very natural whether some of the most obvious mental and spiritual maladies of our own postwar day and generation are not the direct result of moral overstrain—are not a kind of spiritual fatigue poisoning. The Great War overstimulated and overtaxed all the energies of human nature, its capacities for action, coöperation, endurance, enthusiasm,

idealism, emotion. If after the armistice we could all have hibernated like bears for a few months, or could have gone on a long vacation amid new scenes for at least a year with no serious responsibilities whatever, we might have come "back to normalcy" far faster. But that was of course impossible. And as a natural result the whole world has acted for years just like overtired folk who can neither sleep nor lie still. In art and literature, as well as dance and music, our taut nerves have twitched to the spasmodic rhythms of the jazz age, and sought in sex and strong liquor the "kick" of new thrills. No wonder we fell easy victims to what we all call now the postwar hysteria. We saw reds and bolsheviks under every bush, grew panicky over everything that sounded like free speech, and shut our minds tight against new ideas and all opinions other than conventional, in what now begins to appear as a bad attack of mental cramps.

Perhaps the most long-continued and serious symptom of our postwar spiritual state, however, is the fatigue poisoning which has clogged our consciences and paralyzed our wills with the dangerous

toxics of disillusionment and cynicism. To anyone who remembers the long-proved capacity of human nature to dare and endure for the sake of "things not seen as yet," and thus to create a better world for its descendants and achieve a richer and worthier life for itself—a capacity never more evident or widespread than during the Great War itself—the real cause for present anxiety lies not so much in any changing fashions or challenged conventions on the part of the younger generation, as in the present acquiescence of young and old alike in what W. E. Hocking calls "commonplaceness of achievement." We have limited our contemporary ambitions to the satisfaction of our more immediate human wants and are inclined to meet any more heroic and creative challenges with a smile and a shrug of the shoulders and a murmured "What's the use?"

Nor is this moral paralysis limited to the "tired radicals" of whom we have heard so much, whose sanguine social hopes were engulfed in the Great War. To be sure, one of them remarked recently that he had just been asked to address a Liberal Club in one of our great cities on "Is There Any Hope

for Human Nature?" and that he met everywhere among progressives the disposition to take Leibnitz's famous motto in an ironic sense, the reverse of its original optimism. This is indeed "the best of all *possible* worlds"; for nothing better is possible for a humanity so gullible and slow to learn, so hopelessly divided against itself, as the war and the years since have shown us all alike to be.

But such disillusionment is by no means confined to those who would like to see considerable changes in things as they are, or indeed to any single group or point of view. It is widespread and contagious in the moral climate of our time. Dr. Fosdick put his sensitive fingers very close to the subnormal spiritual pulse of our generation in a remarkable sermon preached in New York the Sunday after last Easter, from which the press next day made deservedly extensive quotation.

> Despite all the beauty and the sincerity apparent in the Lenten season just passed, it is very evident that the Christian and moral life of the world is in a bad way. And I present the thesis that this condition is caused not by intellectual skepticism but by moral cynicism, not because

people as a matter of theory disbelieve the proposition of Christianity, but because they live all the time in another atmosphere altogether.

And the failure to recognize this is the reason why so much of our preaching goes wide of the mark. We preach as though we had Robert Ingersoll with his lusty agnoticism on our hands, when in reality we have H. L. Mencken splitting his sides laughing at us. Our sermons still defend Christianity against Tom Paines, while Tom Paine is long dead and Christianity is really facing Lothrop Stoddard with his cynical gospel that we are the Nordic and superior race.

We construct labored arguments to prove the existence of God, while what most people are reading is Sinclair Lewis, having a riotous time burlesquing religion and putting a vile rotter into the Christian pulpit. We attack skepticism when our most popular and powerful enemy is cynicism.

Family life in America is rapidly degenerating. But if we suppose that this degeneration is being brought about by intellectual skepticism we are far off the track. Read the newspapers, attend the theaters, read the novels, and you would think that all husbands are impure, all wives unhappy, and all marriages more or less rotten. With an almost unanimous voice of cynical disparagement the most popular agencies of propaganda we have are smearing the American home. Family life is not being destroyed by theorists who disbelieve in monogamy and are conducting an argumentative campaign for free love. The chief germ that

is eating the heart out of the American home is a tidal flood of moral cynicism.

There would appear to be more than passing significance in the caption of a recent editorial in the New York *Times:*

"Wanted—Faith in Something."

In a book that George Herbert Palmer once spoke of as in his judgment the most important work on religion since James' "Varieties of Religious Experience," written long before the Great War and its various aftermaths had given such startling illustration to his main thesis, William E. Hocking has applied this line of thought to the whole of human experience. The great debt of these lectures to him will at once be evident from the extract prefixed to this lecture and from the following passages, and still more from a reading of his notable chapter on "The Principle of Alternation" from which both are taken.[2]

The effort of work, then, provides for its own arrest. Work, simply as a voluntary application of ideas, does gradually disintegrate those values for which alone work exists. In all literalness life

[2] "The Meaning of God in Human Experience," by W. E. Hocking. Yale University Press, publishers.

ceases to be worth living, and death in some shape will be *sought*. Into the midst of all effort, dutiful or otherwise, there must fall soon or late a sense of the aimlessness of work, a questioning and denial of worth-whileness, a consciousness of moral wear and tear in the determined pursuit of objects whose value is not wholly convincing, a need for recovering sincerity and spiritual poise.

And this new-born need, still of the same moral stuff that first launched the work, now reverses the direction of action, and turns naturally toward some object whose value is convincing without any effort, toward *enjoyment* in some form or other. Pleasure, recreation, friendship, the companionship of men and women, beauty—all these recall the outgoings of ambition and moral effort and reunite a man with his natural appreciation. Something in common these have all with the quest of the mystic, and with the mystic experience itself. And *worship is the whole which includes them all.*

It is not primarily external failure which brings men to worship. It is simply the internal decay of the incentive of work, the drooping of the sails of ambition, the falling out of humor with one's own humor, the mysterious vanishing of the *raison d'etre* of life as a sphere for the theoretical will. And whatever recovers the worth of living by *recovering the natural vigor of the whole idea* is worship, or a part of worship. . . .

For spiritual as well as for bodily fatigue physical nature has its simple advice to give, and

ancient human experience its rule of thumb. As the Egyptian proverb[3] has it, "The archer hitteth the target, partly by pulling, partly by letting go; the boatsman reacheth the landing, partly by pulling, partly by letting go."

Practical service and inner renewal, then, are two equally valid and mutually supplementary poles of the truly and totally religious life. In the theory and the practice, alike of our fathers at one extreme and ourselves at the other, they tend to fall apart and to seem mutually independent or even exclusive; but to a larger and longer look any dilemma between them is a false one.

It is striking to find this *both . . . and* unexpectedly corroborated in the life of a man who was widely regarded as the first American citizen of his generation, and who has been perhaps the most influential figure in the history of American education—President Eliot of Harvard. At first sight he always seemed to his students the very incarnation of austere and self-sufficient strength of character, and to his contemporaries a leader with remarkable powers of

[3] "The Instruction of Ptah Hotep to His Son," by B. G. Gunn. Wisdom of the East Series. Published by E. P. Dutton & Company.

energetic and effective achievement—the last man on earth to need or want to be "pious." Yet in an exchange of letters with George H. Palmer in 1894, published since his death, President Eliot wrote:

Your letter to-day tells me much which is contenting and new to me; but there are two points in it which give me especial satisfaction. The first is your statement that you like to work with me, whether in opposition or alliance.

That seems to me a rewarding outcome of a long association. The other is your remark about my relying "on the eternal for personal strength." I belong to the barest of the religious communions, and I am by nature reserved except with intimates and even with some of them. I feel glad that what has been, I believe, a fact in my inner life these thirty years past has been visible to a close observer in my official career.

I should not like to have it said by the next generation, as has often been said by my contemporaries, that I was a man without ideals and without piety. That would not be good for Harvard. Your sympathetic discernment is therefore a solace and support. It has been hard to have people suppose—even some of my friends—that my interest in the religious policy of the university was a matter of expediency and not of conviction. I am glad that you have inferred from habitual conduct an underlying conviction.

In his recent autobiography,[4] Bishop William Lawrence, speaking out of a lifelong association with President Eliot, makes this significant comment:

> He was a deeply religious man and was always at daily chapel, not, as he insisted, as an example, but for his own strength and comfort. I heard him once say, in speaking of Phillips Brooks's power of prayer, that prayer is the greatest achievement of the human soul.

The consequences of this *both . . . and* run all up and down human life. As Professor Hocking has so strikingly pointed out, it lights up the true relationship between morality and religion, which has steadily perplexed the modern world and tempted it frequently to think that the latter had nothing important to add to the former. It is indeed a relationship of close kinship, and yet by no means one of identity. For psychological analysis as well as for the Christian view of life, each is indispensable if the other is to achieve its own best, and neither can wholly take the place of the other. Conduct is indeed three-fourths of life, and gives its concrete content and ex-

[4] "Memories of a Happy Life," by Bishop William Lawrence. Houghton Mifflin Company, publishers.

pression to worthy religion; but prayer and worship, like the other personal relationships and appreciations of value which all together make up at least the other fourth of life, release and renew energies which supply to conduct its most powerful motivations. Paul has gathered together into one accurate and classic statement both these aspects of life, as Christian experience relates them to each other: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

Not less does such a *both . . . and* illuminate and coördinate the old question which has always divided theology and perplexed religion—the relation between man's responsibility and God's resources for human life and destiny, man's part and God's part in the work of the world. This ancient issue has been raised for our own generation in an acute form by the new humanism, which finds in the religious experience which it vigorously seeks to promote, no supra-human realities or resources, and offers us in effect religion without God. Those who are at all familiar with the psychological and sociological movements which are most

influential in giving direction to the thinking of the younger generation, sense here the real firing-line in the main theological actions of the next few years. We grant at once to the humanists that we must not and cannot expect God to do our thinking or our working for us; our plagues and our poverties and our wars will only be done away as we patiently discover and painfully remove their immediate causes. We grant further that all man's thought of the Ultimate Reality which "no man hath seen nor can see" is inevitably therefore in the form of symbols and pictures, which have themselves been molded by his social relationships; and that his religious experience itself has been similarly conditioned by his social heritage and environment. But we cannot forget that the deeper ranges of the highest religions have always promised to the individual a relationship with the universe itself, beyond and beneath his relation to his social group; and that such "fellowship with God" has been his strength and stay when he has felt himself "called of God" to stand against his fellows. Luther was counting on the support of more than a "cosmic Uncle Sam" when in

the face of the organized society of his day he took his stand at Worms upon his own personal and direct relation with God: "Here I stand. I can do no otherwise. God help me. Amen." Religion has given to both great and small that same individual assurance of ultimate security and victory, alike when haled by contemporary society before its judgment bar, and when faced by the universe with the inexorable mystery of death.

Nor must we forget that even the impulses of hunger and sex, to which modern psychology finds so many similarities in the religious impulse, point always beyond themselves to an objective source of satisfaction—as John Fiske long since remarked. In the case of the sex impulse—as indeed of all personal relationships—that other object is capable also not only of response but of initiative. Religion insists that our truest symbols for our worthiest relation to the universe are to be found not only within realm of life, but in human relationships at their best; and has always given men the personal assurance not alone of capacity for response, but of benevolent initiative in the Ultimate Reality which it calls God.

That characteristic assurance comes to classical expression in the twenty-third Psalm, in such summaries of the Christian gospel as John 3: 16, and no less in such modern poetry as Francis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven." It makes religious men sure, not only of the reality and power, but of the love of God. No theory of religion is adequate which does not do justice to this conviction both of the divine coöperation and of the divine initiative.

John Morley's famous remark in his study of Oliver Cromwell, that "practical mystics" like Cromwell go farthest and achieve most in human affairs, becomes the more intelligible at this point. The practical bent of such men makes them efficient in action; their mystical sense relates them to purposes greater than their own and supplies them ever with new energies. The religious man at his best and his most is such a "practical mystic." The father of modern missions, William Carey, has left to posterity an extraordinarily comprehensive and accurate utterance of such religious faith at its best, and his own heroic career of laborious achievement incarnated his slogan: "*Attempt great things for God: expect*

*great things from God.*" The *both . . . and* of such unselfish adventurousness with such serene confidence is vital religion's characteristic and creative contribution to human living. The "ethical creativity" which it produces has been superbly stated by Professor Hocking:

> Some superabundance there is in the vision of God which sends the seer back, not to the old, but to the new; not with a release from old grievances, but with something like a hunger for pain and difficulty. The edge of the tool of will is restored, and it is eager for world-making. The man is able to fight, to oppose and suffer; he is endowed with grit, with faith. This is the moral result of true worship.[5]

It is in the teachings and above all in the life of Jesus that this union of the skilled and serviceable hand with the listening ear and the kindled heart, comes to its fullest realization. We have already noted his directions for the reaping of the spiritual fields which he saw white to the harvest: they are to be reaped not by prayer but by labor; but the best laborers are those whom God sends forth and supplies with energy to toil

[5] "The Meaning of God in Human Experience," by W. E. Hocking. The Yale University Press, publishers.

through the long hot day; and the surest way to secure such equipment for effective work is by taking time first for prayer

> The kingdom of God was a name for something conceived of by him as being alike the climax of the working of Divine Providence and the goal of human effort.[6]

Bishop Williams of Detroit, one of the social prophets of our generation, used to delight to point out to audiences of students the balance and rhythm in Jesus's own living between service and devotion, outgo and intake, work and prayer. After days crowded with teaching and healing out among men, he was away into the mountain or the desert long before daybreak for communion with God. Just before the critical choice of his twelve intimate associates, we are told that he spent the whole night in prayer. After his inward struggle and final self-dedication on his knees in Gethsemane, we catch one glimpse of him rising and going out through the olive trees to meet his betrayer and his enemies—and then to bear his own cross.

---

[6] "Reality," by B. H. Streeter. The Macmillan Company, publishers.

If these things seem to be paradoxes, religion, like life itself, is full of such; and the deeper and truer the religion, the more paradoxes it includes. Rarely if ever has this fundamental two-sidedness of religion on its deepest levels been more clearly recognized or more beautifully stated than in the great hymn of George Matheson:

"Make me a captive, Lord,
And then I shall be free.
Force me to render up my sword,
And I shall conqueror be.
I faint in life's alarms
When by myself I stand.
Imprison me within Thine arms
And strong shall be my hand.

My heart is weak and poor
Until it master find.
It has no spring of action sure
It varies with the wind.
It cannot freely move
Till Thou hast wrought its chain.
Enslave it with Thy matchless love,
And deathless it shall reign.

My power is faint and low
Till it have learned to serve.
It wants the needed fire to glow,
It wants the breeze to nerve.

It cannot drive the world
  Until itself be driven.
Its flag can only be unfurled
  When Thou shalt breathe from heaven.

My will is not my own
  Till Thou hast made it Thine.
If it would reach a monarch's throne,
  It must its crown resign.
It only stands unbent
  Amid the clashing strife,
When on Thy bosom it has leant
  And found in Thee its life."

"Hymns of the Kingdom of God." A. S. Barnes & Company, Publishers.

# CHAPTER IV

## DEFINITION AND SYMBOL

"When I am tired of earnest men,
Intense and keen and sharp and clever,
Pursuing Fame with brush or pen
Or counting metal disks forever,
Then from the halls of Shadowland
Across the trackless, purple sea
Old Martin's ghost comes back to stand
Beside my desk and talk with me.

Some people ask: What cruel chance
Made Martin's life so sad a story?
Martin? Why, he exhaled romance
And wore an overcoat of glory.
A fleck of sunlight in the street,
A horse, a book, a girl who smiled,
Such visions made each moment sweet
For this receptive, ancient child.

Because it was old Martin's lot
To be—not make—a decoration,
Shall we then scorn him, having not
His genius of appreciation?
Rich joy and love he got and gave,
His heart was merry as his dress,
Pile laurel wreaths upon his grave:
He did not gain, he was, Success."

"Poems, Essays, and Letters," by Joyce Kilmer.
George H. Doran & Company, Publishers.

# CHAPTER IV

## DEFINITION AND SYMBOL

ONE of the most delightful of contemporary British essayists, Robert Lynd, has recently contributed to the London *New Statesman*[1] a vivid picture of a friend whom he does not name, but entitles "A Man of Genius":

There has died during the week a man who, of all the men I have ever known, seemed most to enjoy being alive. Not only this, but he seemed equally to enjoy making other people enjoy being alive. Under God, only Charles Dickens could have created him. It was as natural to him to be a good Samaritan as it is to a child to play with its toys. Some one once compared him, in the energy of his generosity and his happiness, to a mixture of Father Christmas and an errand-boy careering along on one roller-skate. He would certainly have got more happiness out of one roller-skate than anybody else could have got out of two, and he would have felt no grievance against fate for having equipped him so inadequately and no envy of others who were more richly provided. Life sang in him as he went his way.

Yet, if he had chosen to grumble against fate,

[1] *The New Statesman*, February 5, 1927, page 500.

he had better cause for grumbling than most men who look back bitterly on their childhood. As a result of the failure of his father's business, he was brought up in poverty that sometimes came very near starvation. Often, as a child, he had to earn the next meal by singing for pennies outside public-houses. . . .

This, no doubt, suggests only a part of the surroundings amid which his childhood was passed. It suggests the poverty but not the family affections that were always so great a part of his life. It was these affections that brought him through all sorts of perilous experiences with a most delightful innocence that was the other side of a delightful wisdom. Innocence is often thought of as a negative quality; but his innocence was as positive a quality as the light of a star or as the good humor of Falstaff. . . .

I have called him a man of genius, and I know no other phrase that could describe him. For genius is simply energy of creation, and you were conscious of a creative presence every time he entered a room. Of his professional work and his public work I will not speak, though these he created to noble purpose. But everything he did had the touch of creative genius, and difficulties disappeared before him as ugliness disappeared before the brush of Fra Angelico. There is not a single field that one has ever crossed with him that one will ever be able to cross again without thinking of him. One will almost see him as one climbs over a stile or passes through a wood or

opens the creaking gate into the village teashop. The books he liked, the gifts he gave, the very restaurants where one dined with him, will always have for his friends this rich cloud of associations. Many men leave behind them one friend or even two who remember them in this way: many leave behind them a multitude of acquaintances who like them. But he has left behind him a multitude of friends; and to each of them it will seem that the world has lost its most infectiously cheerful and courageous presence. It is not merely that he was a good fellow: it is that he was a good man of a kind of which it is not easy for their friends to believe that there are two in the world at the same time. Of course, there are others, but it does not fall to one man's lot to meet them. There are artists who express themselves not in words or in colors or in music, but in a constant energy of courage, open and secret kindnesses, and happiness in the passing moment—with whom the very day's work is fiery and alight with imagination—and among these artists I think of him as possessing genius beyond any one else I have ever known.

Merely to read these lines, without having ever known this "man of genius," is to catch some new sense of the richness and joy of living. Both the essayist and the poet whose lines are prefixed to this chapter, use the significant word "genius" for this contagious power of appreciation. But

it is plainly genius of a very different type from that which we Americans have in mind when we speak of a mechanical or inventive or business or scientific genius. In an age which has already achieved such control over nature, and is looking forward to still greater conquests, the more and more frequent connotation of the word is that which a recent senior class at Yale evidently had in mind when it voted Edison the greatest man now living. Such genius breaks up the materials and the forces of the outside world into their elements, and then puts them together again into new and useful combinations that give us electric lights, talking machines, radio sets, aëroplanes—and who knows what next? But even our modern preoccupation with these amazing achievements of technical and scientific genius will not let us quite forget that the word belongs no less to the great creative artists and musicians, poets and statesmen and saints of the race.

Thus we come into view of the fact that there are two different aspects of the world we live in, two correspondingly different capacities in human nature, two different phases therefore of human experience: both

of them real and both of them important. These men of genius, of whichever kind, possess in heightened measure gifts that most of us have to some degree at least; with their example and evidence before us, we realize that life is more than a plane on one flat level—it is a solid with three dimensions. In one of these aspects we deal with the analysis and measurement of the world about us in terms of *quantity*, so as to manage it practically for getting or making the things we want. This is the realm of measurement and utility, in which our science lives and moves and has its being. But life has also another dimension, with which we can only deal in terms of *quality*. This is the realm of evaluation and appreciation, which seeks the enrichment and enhancement of life itself; it is the realm of beauty, of goodness, of religion, and of all personal relationships that involve friendship and affection.

But it is far easier to perceive these different dimensions in the concrete than in the abstract. We can discriminate them at once in the two attitudes which men may take toward nature. A clever Chinese delegate to a recent American student sum-

mer conference greatly delighted his hearers with an illustration he used to suggest the characteristic interests and attitudes of three different races of modern men. Here is a great cataract, he said—Niagara, for instance. The Indian who comes to see it is carried away into rapt and solitary communion with the Infinite; the Chinese, on the other hand, wishes for his whole family and all his friends to enjoy it with him; but the American starts at once to figuring how much horsepower is going to waste there—and what could be done with it. Dean Sperry in his recent book, "Reality in Worship," tells of a young American sitting on a summit overlooking the Pacific, who said in reply to a remark about the beauty of the outlook: "Yes, it is beautiful, but I hate to see all that water out there *doing* nothing." There speaks the practical and energetic man of action who, instructed and reënforced by all that modern science can put at his disposal, will harness and even transform the natural world to something nearer his heart's desire. Nor need the lover of nature for its own sake smile with too complacent condescension at such utilitarianism—so long as the young engineer

for his part does not think that the only value of the Pacific lies in the horsepower it can contribute to his schemes. On the far Maine coast where I once spent a summer, an engineering genius backed by ample capital is just now carrying forward a vast superpower project that will harness the mighty tides of the Bay of Fundy to the industrial development and domestic convenience of both New England and the Maritime Provinces. Those

> "moving waters at their priestlike task
> Of pure ablution round earth's human shores"

will then be trained to an even more purposive and powerful task, and one not less contributory to human welfare, than the cleansing work which Keats so poetically described.

Our present point is not therefore a debate as to whether the attitude of the engineer toward nature, or that of the nature-lover and the poet, is more valuable for human life than the other: but rather that each attitude has its own distinctive place and function, and that there is an aspect of reality in the universe itself which answers to and indeed coöperates with each

of these attitudes. The true relation between them is not "*either . . . or*," but "*both . . . and.*" Those thousands of us who travel every summer hundreds of miles to that same New England coast for our vacation would not do so year after year simply to see even the greatest of superpower projects, or just to utilize its light and energy for our cottage or even for our factory. What takes us there is the discovery that life by the side of those same "moving waters" for a few weeks refreshes and indeed "re-creates" us in body, mind, and spirit, until we return to our work as new men and women. Our outlook on life is enlarged and steadied by the cumulative influence of the sea upon the human spirit which prompted a British writer recently to call the ocean "the great breeder of sanity." We feel within ourselves the magic and creative touch which Keats has once more described so well—

"The Ocean, with its vastness, its blue-green,
Its ships, its rocks, its caves, its hopes, its fears—
Its voice mysterious, which whoso hears,
Must think on what will be and what has been."

We find the same double aspect of expe-

rience in other realms as well. Not long ago I was invited to attend the Beethoven Centennial Concert by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Doubtless there were in that crowded hall people with all sorts of immediate and perhaps rather utilitarian purposes in being there that night: some to be seen in a certain dress, or a certain box; some to accept the invitation of a host they did not like to decline; some to study the technique of a certain instrument; some to enjoy a certain personal companionship. My own hostess was telling me in an interval the dramatic story of the discovery of the first cellist of the orchestra in a Chicago moving picture theater by the conductor and some of his associates, who had been told that there was a very remarkable cello player in that orchestra, and who thereupon went together to that theater with purposes far more utilitarian than "seeing a show" or even enjoying the music. Just at that moment the cellos and basses swung into the marvelous measures of the Allegretto in the Seventh Symphony—and presently, under the magic of that flowing inexorable rhythm and transporting harmony, I had forgotten the personal history of one mu-

sician, forgotten the suddenly hushed audience, forgotten even my hostess. I was moving all alone with that music down the resistless stream of time, growing older every moment—with no hope and no desire of turning back against the stream. Beethoven as no one else stirs deep within some of us, who are by no means musicians, that profound elemental sense of the majesty and mystery of life, its infinite horizons and its immeasurable heights and depths, which inspires so much of his music. Some one asked him once the meaning of the quick note thrice struck in the bass, followed by the strange downward interval to a long deep tone, which recurs so often at the beginning of the Fifth Symphony. His answer helps us to understand the power over us of much of his greatest music: "Also pocht das Schicksal an die Thüre."[2] He has enhanced our sense and experience of life itself, widened our horizons, and given us glimpses into infinite depths of tragedy and illimitable heights of possibility.

In the realm of personal relationships the difference between these two attitudes is still more familiar and significant. Dean

[2] "So fate knocks at the door."

Sperry has delightfully reminded us[3] that we all have any number of acquaintances whom we do not hesitate to "use" most shamelessly in "social trading upon one another." But "the mark of the friend is that in him which draws us to him as one whom we enjoy, but do not use. He becomes to us an end in himself, and not a means to some other end. We cheapen friendship when we 'make use' of our friends." I have recently had striking evidence of this in a remark to me, made independently of each other by two close friends of two wealthy men: each said that he never felt he could ask his friend for money for the best of causes, or introduce to him people who wanted to ask for money. Their relationship was an end in itself, too precious to be used for any ulterior purpose whatever. This is of course even truer of those nearest of kin who are dearest to us. Just as doctors are reluctant to attend and unwilling to operate on their own relatives in a crisis, so most of us are unwilling to "use" those we love best as means toward any personal end whatever. They are them-

[3] "Reality in Worship," by W. L. Sperry. The Macmillan Company, publishers.

selves the most valuable ends in our world, toward whose welfare and happiness we must make ourselves the means. As such they create and enhance the highest values we find in life: they, or some cause to which similarly we can devote ourselves, make life worth living.

From various sides and by different roads, a considerable company of modern thinkers seem to be converging upon the recognition of this fundamental duality in the universe, and likewise in our human capacity for dealing with it. The philosopher Hocking distinguishes the functions of utility and fertility in life and finds science a conspicuous example of the former, religion of the latter. The theologian Sperry, thinking along much the same line, speaks of these two aspects as use and enjoyment. In a recent important work on "Religious Experice and Scientific Method," the philosopher H. N. Wieman calls them "the two sides of life," and contrasts them as "efficiency versus appreciation," or "adaptation versus creativity." "Scientific method and religious experience," he says,[4] "are the most

[4]Page 119.

extreme expressions of a duality that runs all through human living." Nor is this recognition limited to philosophers and theologians writing in the interest of religion. It is very striking to find the astronomer A. S. Eddington of the University of Cambridge, a foremost exponent of the new physics, saying in his notable essay on "The Domain of Physical Science":[5] "I venture to say that the division of the external world into a material world and a spiritual world is superficial, and that the deep line of cleavage is between the metrical and the non-metrical aspects of the world." He goes on to limit the domain of physics and indeed of all exact science to the former realm, and to leave the latter wide open for religion, and for all that has to do with the "relationships of spirit to spirit on the human plane—a relation which means much more than physical science is able to formulate." A similar recognition of the validity of both science and religion in their own distinctive realms, and yet of the corrective and stimulating service which each can render the other in their inevitable interac-

[5] Symposium of "Science, Religion, and Reality," by J. Needham. The Macmillan Company, publishers.

tion, underlies the remarkable chapter on "Science and Religion" by the British mathematician and philosopher A. N. Whitehead, now of Harvard, in his "Science in the Modern World." Such a correlation between science and religion, with full recognition of the rights and validities of each, has been worked out with special clearness and consistency by Canon Streeter of Oxford in his recent book, "Reality," which seems to many of us one of the most valuable works on religion written in recent years.

The simplest of illustrations may make clearer the main point of this large consensus in contemporary thought which rejects an "*either . . . or*" and works toward a "*both . . . and*" between science and religion. Our two hands are by no means duplicates—as one quickly finds who tries to put the same glove on both. But in any task, from sewing to sculpture, each hand may help the other. Several times a day most of us rediscover that neither hand can easily or effectively wash itself; for that important process each needs the other. Just so does science help religion, as Wieman points out, by purging it continually of the sentimen-

tality and traditionalism which so easily cling to it. Just so also can religion help science, by freshening its sense of worthwhileness and adventurousness from the accumulating dust and weariness of its own detailed labor. In Wieman's own different figure, these are the two legs of the ladder by which humanity climbs; and "the one without the other comes to nought."

Each of these two aspects of human experience has similarly its own characteristic methods and instruments. Canon Streeter points out that science works with representations of reality which may be best likened to *diagrams*. The verbal counterpart of a diagram is a *definition*. The essential elements in a diagram or a definition are accuracy of analysis and description of the elements in the given situation which are important for the purpose in hand, and some correspondence in scale and proportion to their actual relations with each other. The definition of the three-lettered word *key* in the Century Dictionary, for instance, is as follows:

> An instrument for fastening or opening a lock, fitted to its wards, and adapted, on being inserted

and turned or pushed in the keyhole, to push a bolt one way or the other, or to raise a catch or latch; in certain complicated locks, a portable appliance which on being inserted in the proper place in the lock lifts tumblers or in some other way allows the bolt to be shot without itself exercising force upon it.

In addition to this elaborate and accurate 77-word analysis and description of the familiar instrument and the way it works, an illustration or picture is added which for most of us makes the matter much plainer than any abstract definition. Fortunately, a timid woman or a tipsy man, or even a tiny child for that matter, can get into the house with a key, without ever having heard or being able to understand such a definition, or even without knowing just how the key operates in the lock. That knowledge is very important to the locksmith, but not necessarily to the householder.

The other aspect of life, with which religion and all forms of art deal, is represented to us not by diagrams and definitions, but by *pictures* and *symbols*. These make no claim to be accurate in their analysis or exhaustive in their description; they deliberately select certain elements in the given

situation and put them in the foreground of their representation, in order to awaken or enlarge in the beholder certain appreciations—to arouse his sense of value or enrich his experience of life. Their point lies therefore not in their exactness, but in their appropriateness and suggestiveness—in what they "connote" even more than in what they "denote." By diagram or strict definition a flag is only a piece of cloth of different colors; but as a symbol it conveys to any lover of his country a whole history of meanings, and starts a swift stream of emotions. Human experience is too diverse and subtle ever to be comprehended by diagrams and definitions alone. The very word *key* has long since outgrown its original denotation and acquired at least ten different derived meanings essentially symbolic, to the interpretation of which the Century Dictionary devotes no less than 95 words besides the 77 already quoted.

*Both* diagram or definition *and* picture or symbol are thus necessary for any complete representation of reality; and the question which of the two we shall use at the moment, depends upon the purpose or interest uppermost at the time. To borrow Canon

Streeter's perfect illustration of this important point, if a friend is thinking of visiting Venice for the first time, and we want to show him where the hotel we recommend is located in relation to the railroad station or the Grand Canal, a diagram of the city is the thing to use. But if we want to convince him that Venice is worth visiting, or arouse in him the attitude of mind which will get most out of a visit, we would better show him, not a diagram, but Turner's famous picture. And if we want to give him the best idea possible of Venice as a whole, we shall have to use *both* diagram and picture. "Just so . . . the no less contrasted Representations given by Science and Religion are both required for the fullest possible apprehension of Reality."[6]

Now personal relations, and the values they embody, are always expressed through symbols. Friendship and love, like life itself, are proverbially incapable of either exact or adequate definition: to be understood they must be experienced, and to those who have thus personally discovered their characteristic quality and richness

[6] "Reality," by B. H. Streeter. The Macmillan Company, publishers.

from within, symbols which connote that quality and express its "feel" are the only possible terms of utterance. I recall from my boyhood a newspaper contest, with the inevitable prize, for the best definition of a friend; and I think I can repeat pretty closely the prize-winner. "A friend is the first person who comes in at the back door when all the world goes out at the front door." Now, strictly speaking, that is not a definition at all, but a vivid picture of friendship. It cannot be taken literally: grocer-boys and peddlers come in at the back door, as well as friends. But any one who has ever passed through any such experience of misunderstanding and inner loneliness as the picture implies, will recognize at once its insight and truth to the very genius of friendship.

Poets and lovers understand all this well enough—and govern their language accordingly. The youth on the street talks of his beloved as a "daisy" or a "peach," and the love songs keep his idiom, "My Wild Irish Rose," "My Scotch Bluebell." The great lyrics lift the same symbolic speech to higher levels of intensity of feeling and beauty of utterance:

"O my Luve's like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June:
O my Luve's like the melodie
That's sweetly play'd in tune."

Love and poetry alike, moreover, instinctively protest against anything that savors of the prying analysis and cataloguing exactness of description to the last detail, which are of the very essence of scientific accuracy. They envisage their objects as wholes, emphasize their own reaction to their value as unanalyzed and undivided ends in themselves, and warn us explicitly against the danger of not seeing the wood for the trees. Some of us in our susceptible youth used to sing:

"Not that you are fair, dear,
Not that you are true,
Not your golden hair, dear,
Not your eyes of blue—
If you ask the reason,
Words are all too few.
For I know I love you,
Because you're you."

And in one of the profoundest of her "Sonnets from the Portuguese" Elizabeth Barrett Browning has given classic utterance to this attitude. It will have neither

utilitarianism nor calculation in its passion of love for wholeness and finality as an end in itself.

"If thou must love me, let it be for nought
Except for love's sake only. Do not say
'I love her for her smile, her look, her way
Of speaking gently, for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day';
For these things in themselves, beloved, may
Be changed, or change for thee: and love so wrought
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry:
A creature might forget to weep, who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby
But love me for love's sake, that evermore
Thou mayst love on through love's eternity."

Now symbolism is the native speech of religion, no less truly than of love and of poetry. This is partly of course because of the very nature of religion: it deals with the individual's relation to the universe, interprets that relationship as intensely personal, and expresses it as an inward experience that is its own best and all-sufficient evidence. Like friendship and love, religion is therefore only to be really understood by those who have personally experienced

something of it; and all its genuine utterances carry and evoke the "feel" of such first-handness. But more than this. The great religions of the world have all been given to us by Oriental races whose type of mind and habits of speech run to picturesque symbolism rather than to scientific accuracy or philosophical analysis. To open Tagore's "Gitanjali" is to begin to realize the genius of the East to this day for the utterance of religious experience in a succession of haunting pictures. Nor is this incessant symbolism characteristic of its poetry or religion alone. When the Barrows Lectures were being given in Calcutta, an Indian student not so very many years younger than Mrs. Gilkey said to her suddenly in the midst of a friendly talk: "I will call you mother." The chronological and biological implications of so unexpected a salutation struck a bit strangely upon matter-of-fact Western ears, until we found that it is the general custom of Indian young men to address as "mother" those older women to whom they look up for personal counsel and inner understanding; so that this spontaneous salutation was therefore the finest compliment he could have paid her.

Still more is this true of the Semites, whose racial genius has run neither to science nor philosophy, but with characteristic intensity and vividness to poetry and religion. They have always thought and spoken, not in abstractions or analyses, but in pictures. Dr. H. E. Fosdick has recently brought back from his stay in Palestine the story of an Arab who was describing to his fellow the telegraph from Beirut to Damascus. "It is just like a long dog," he said. "If you tickle his nose in Beirut, he will wag his tail in Damascus." That is valueless as a scientific description or explanation of the electrical apparatus in question; but as a picturesque statement of the main point in its practical availability, made to a man who knew much about dogs and nothing about electricity, it had something to commend it —and it has far more to suggest to every reader of the Bible. For the entire Bible was produced, and Christianity itself has been transmitted to us, by a race that thought, talked, and wrote in pictures; and every page is written in that symbolic chirography. The books of Daniel and Revelation show us the results in their more extreme and enigmatic form. The twenty-third

Psalm, on the other hand, and above all the parables of Jesus, are supreme examples of the simplicity, beauty, and moving power of symbolism as the best of all ways of conveying religious truth. Most students of the mind of Jesus will agree to the recent statement of Canon Streeter as probably well within the truth: "Jesus always taught (probably he also thought) to a large extent in parable and metaphor."[7]

We Westerners have long since discovered, from our adventures in humor, what disastrous results ensue when some one takes a picture or symbol that was intended to suggest only one point of resemblance, and treats it as a diagram or a definition to be literally applied according to scale at all points of detail. One of our pet American complaints about our British cousins is that they thus take our best jokes literally and ride them to death on all fours as serious statements of fact. The American assertion that the Englishman has no sense of humor some of us have long since discovered to our cost to be very wide of the mark. His humor is predominantly personal; and when

[7] "Reality," B. H. Streeter. The Macmillan Company, publishers.

his "ragging" makes us self-conscious Americans sensitive or even resentful because we take it seriously, he draws the same conclusion about us that we do about him—that we can't "see the joke." Our humor, on the other hand, turns on whimsical comparison or still more on wild exaggeration, which he on his part often takes seriously as plain prevarication. Dr. Fosdick tells a delightful instance of this from his last visit to London. Speaking of the bigness of things American as compared with the compactness of things British, he had said that there was hardly enough water in the Thames to serve as "a gargle for the mouth of the Mississippi." The striking phrase was of course widely taken up by the press; and presently he received the inevitable letter from a correspondent, seriously questioning the accuracy of his assertion!

Yet that is just what our whole Western world has done time and again with Oriental symbols and figures in things religious. A Hebrew prophet once told a striking story in order to widen the international outlook and sympathies of his provincially minded fellow countrymen, and to arouse their sense of God's care and of their own responsi-

bility for other races than their own; it is the first great foreign missionary document in religious history. We literal-minded Occidentals have now for generations used that document chiefly as the occasion for an ichthyological debate as to whether a whale has a throat big enough to swallow a man, and a theological discussion as to just what would be the significance of the event for religion if he could. As a result, most of us have missed its real point altogether. A first-century Christian of extraordinary imaginative power and deep religious faith, following a well-known and widely used contemporary literary method, once wrote a remarkable religious document to hearten his fellow Christians in the face of sore persecution and threatening martyrdom at the hands of the Roman state. For centuries now our Western world has missed contact with his kindling faith by treating his glowing pictures, fantastic and enigmatic as many of them certainly are, chiefly as a kind of chronological cross-word puzzle concealing the future course of human history, except to those who think they have the right clue. Jesus himself, looking down from the high walls of Jerusalem upon the

deep valley where the city's refuse was burned, used those consuming fires as a vivid picture of the certainty and ultimate completeness of the elimination of evil from God's moral order. But literal-minded medieval artists and theologians, and some modern evangelists too, have turned his striking symbols into the horrible rigidities of a hell-fire theology that revolts the intelligence of men and insults the character of God. In matters less serious, the result in each of these cases might have been simply funny; but in its actual effects on the cause of sound religion, the result in every case has been tragic.

It is not simply the understanding of the Bible that is helped by such recognition of the naturalness and frequency of symbolism in religion. All human thought of God is inevitably symbolic. The New Testament itself is very explicit on that point: "No man hath seen God at any time"; "whom no man hath seen, nor can see." Josiah Royce, one of the foremost of American philosophers, used to put this realization in vivid metaphor to his students: "God never sat for his photograph." All our thought of God must inevitably be in symbols; and

since these symbols can only be chosen from our own human experience, they will inevitably be open to the charge of anthropomorphism. But this charge loses its seriousness the moment it is recognized that humanity's symbols for God will be outgrown one after another as the race advances in intellectual knowledge and moral insight, and that there is no end to this outgrowing process; and still more, that every stage in it gives us still a symbol, never a definition, of the Ultimate Reality.

Jesus himself seems frankly to have recognized this. His favorite name for God, Father, is a symbol taken from human parenthood at its best. That symbol does not claim to express or exhaust all the relations of God to the universe; even a human parent has many responsibilities and relationships which his children little understand and may not even know about. The main elements in the parental relationship, human and divine alike, are therefore not complete understanding, but filial dependence and mutual trust and love. It is a striking evidence of the intellectual accuracy as well as of the spiritual insight of Jesus, that he explicitly recognized the

symbolic character of his own favorite thought of God, and warned us against scaling our conceptions of Him, mental and moral alike, down to the very imperfect standards of human parenthood as we know or exemplify it. He would not let his symbol be taken for a definition. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, *how much more* . . . your Father." Personality, no less than fatherhood, is similarly a symbol rather than a definition when applied to God; but it is at least a symbol taken from the higher rather than the lower ranges of human experience—where so much modern thinking about the Ultimate Reality is content to move. There is insight and restraint alike in a significant sentence from President H. S. Coffin's recent essay on "My Idea of God": "Is God a person? I prefer to put it that he has personal relations with us."

But while the best Christian thinking from Jesus onward has always recognized the symbolic character of all its thought and mental pictures of God, it has insisted on the *qualitative* reality of its own experience of God, and on the capacity of men not only to know but to share the moral character of

God. "Love your enemies, . . . that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven," said Jesus; and in such uncalculating and outreaching love he found and exemplified the genuine kinship between the human spirit and the divine. God's goodness is indeed greater than ours: "Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God." But our goodness and love may and ought to be of the same *kind* as His—as Jesus' own goodness and love actually were.

If we are ever to understand—much more if we are ever to share in—the Christian faith in the divinity or the deity of Christ (there is no real reason for distinguishing the two terms, if thinking on this point is kept clear and straight), it can only be with the help of a "both . . . and" at just this crucial point. Sound Christian thinking has never claimed that Jesus reveals to us *all* of God. The Gospels tell us frankly that there were things he could not do, and he said himself that there were things known only to God which he did not claim to know. The fourth Gospel puts this very simply: "The Father is greater than I." For Christian thinking, therefore, Jesus is, as Canon Streeter well puts it, "a representative

symbol of the Divine." What worthier symbol can there be than human personality at its highest and best, as given to us in him? But for Christian experience, that has found through Jesus the love of God made manifest in its own heart and life as a present fact and force, "the Representation and the Reality are of the same stuff."

What the metaphysical relation of Jesus —or our own for that matter—may be to the Ultimate Reality, we do not claim to know; but in him we find revealed to us, not some lower order or quality of moral being, but the very life and love that are for us divine—the God in Whom we put our faith for time and eternity. Whatever may be its metaphysics or ours, we too share the moral and religious experience behind the ancient symbol: Jesus is for us also "of one substance with the Father."

# CHAPTER V

## THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE GROUP

"Look upon suffering as a necessary condition of labor for any cause worth working for—whether it be the learning of a lesson, the production of a work of art, the bringing up of a family, or the steering of a ship to port—and its character is changed. Realize that the stupidity, the indifference, the malice, and the selfishness of man have always been such an obstacle to progress that every forward step has been paid for in blood and tears; that, because casualties are the price of victory, sacrifice, pushed at times to the point of martyrdom, though not in itself a thing to be desired, is necessary and worth while—and things are seen in a new light. If it is in this way and in this spirit that the Divinity immanent in the world is suffering, striving, overcoming, then to take one's share in the work is to be allowed, as St. Paul puts it (Col. 1: 24), to pay part of 'the unpaid balance (so it reads in Greek) of the sufferings of Christ.' Then, indeed, not perhaps every day and always, but at least in our moments of deeper vision, such pain becomes no longer a burden, but a privilege."

"Reality," by B. H. Streeter. The Macmillan Company, publishers.

# CHAPTER V

## THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE GROUP

LAST summer, in the sailboat that is our favorite vacation vehicle, we took our first cruise as a family along a section of the Maine coast that was new to all of us. The second day out we anchored for lunch off a large island in Muscongus Bay, and enticed by an alluring prospect, decided to eat it on shore. A rich green meadow interrupted the thick pine woods that covered most of the island, and stretched in triangular shape from the rocky shore as a base to an apex deep in the forest. At that far point of the triangle was a farmhouse that looked as if it might go back almost to colonial and certainly to pioneer days. Under the trees at the edge of the meadow we had our picnic lunch, and then started for the farmhouse to enjoy what promised to be a superb outlook.

As we turned presently to look out from the house toward the open ocean, a friend from another boat said to me: "Did you see any view halfway round the world that is

much finer than this?" It was a natural question. Across the lush green of the meadow the waves were breaking against the rocky shore, and marking every reef and shoal across the bay with white. Island after island dotted the deep blue with the dark green of dense pines. The high cliffs of Monhegan framed the picture to the far south, and beyond stretched the open Atlantic. What a sense for scenic beauty the settler must have had who chose that spot at the corner of the meadow for his home, and how generous was nature in opening out from that favored site such a prospect of green and blue and white!

So said we all in our ignorance. But as we went back straight toward our boat through the very middle of the meadow that we supposed nature had planted there, our eyes were opened to the real truth. There in the center, hidden from sight by the deep grass till we almost stumbled upon it, was a large low pile of stones of all sizes, weather-beaten and moss-covered with the years. After a puzzled moment, its meaning flashed upon me; and I called my children back to explain to them that when the first white man landed on that island there was no

meadow upon it at all, but only unbroken forest anchored with these endless stones. The same settler who built the house had made his own meadow, felling the trees, pulling out the stumps, and hauling away the stones one by one to make this pile. We tried to picture to ourselves his entire family, big and little, toiling at the slow laborious task under the hot sun of July or the bleak skies of chill November. The magnificent view and the green meadow that disclosed it, both of which we had taken for granted as nature's generous gift, were rather the heroic creation of some man whose tireless labor, blessed by the sun and rain of the slow decades, and coöperating with God's creative fertility of seed and soil, had literally made that meadow and opened out that view. His very name is doubtless forgotten—and so perhaps would have been his patient toil and victorious faith, but for the silent unobtrusive memorial of the pile of stones that told its moving story to us who had stumbled upon it.

So is it with most of the emancipations that have widened the outlook and beautified the prospect of our human life. They have come about neither by chance nor as

the free gift of a provident nature, but as the hard-won achievement of the vision and courage and patience of men, coöperating with the creative energies of God. And as they have not been cheaply won, so they do not maintain themselves automatically. It seemed to us on the island that day that the present inhabitants of the old house were not maintaining, much less extending, their heritage of conquest over the forest. All around the edges of the meadow scores of small but fast-growing pines and bushes gave plain warning that the forest is creeping back. In such a situation, eternal vigilance and ever-renewed labor are the price of liberty. It is a constant struggle to keep what the fathers have bequeathed us, and a harder struggle to extend it.

Doubtless there were not enough neighbors in those sparsely settled days to sit scornfully on the rocks and laugh at the folly of so adventurous and radical an undertaking as the clearing of the meadow; but it would have been just like human nature, and very much in the typical course of human history, if they had done so.

On our way home from India we met in London an elderly Scotchman, one of those

British pioneers in the Orient who may fairly be counted among the makers of modern India. He had gone out to Ceylon in his youth as a coffee planter, in the old days when coffee was the chief cultivated product of those rich fields and bold green mountainsides where—

> "the spicy breezes
> Blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle."

He told us that just as he was well established, there came an obscure but deadly blight upon the coffee plants that devastated the prosperity of Ceylon, and (as he succinctly put it) "ruined him, but made his character." In this necessity, which proved for him the mother of invention, he began to experiment with tea. His neighbors laughed at him; and when he set off a small piece of ground to raise tea seed for future use, their ridicule became so sharp that he used regularly to go sixty miles out of his way to avoid Colombo and the jeers of his friends who lived there. Meanwhile the government had sent to northern India asking for the loan of an agricultural expert to tell them what to plant instead of coffee. The expert was too busy to come, but replied

that one thing which certainly would *not* grow in Ceylon was tea!

Now of course the humor of that expert opinion and popular prejudice lies in the fact that the rich prosperity of modern Ceylon (whose people, an eminent member of the Indian Legislative Assembly once remarked to me as an American with a twinkle in his eye, are "too prosperous to *think*") is built very largely on tea. Every reader of a Lipton advertisement knows where the tea grows that has supported all of the recent challenges for the America's Cup. And every visitor who takes the magnificent ride up the green-swathed mountain sides from Colombo to Kandy passes through mile after mile of dark green tea bushes dotting the brown earth, that tell plainer than any advertisement the secret of Ceylon's wealth. Our Scotch friend told us with a smile that his own annual profits from that little patch of tea seed which his neighbors ridiculed so, now run into hundreds of pounds—thousands of dollars.

What an old story it is in the annals of human progress! Just so fifty years ago men were laughing at George M. Pullman's

fantastic idea of a railroad car on which passengers could go to bed for a comfortable night's sleep; but now when we travel, we do well to reserve our Pullman berth days ahead to be sure of getting one. Just so a hundred years ago men laughed at the steamboat as "Fulton's folly," and passed resolutions against railroads on the ground that God never meant men to travel at twenty miles an hour! Just so within our own lifetime men have declared that a horse could never trot a mile in two minutes, or a man vault twelve feet or jump higher than six, or get off the ground in a heavier-than-air machine. Only a decade ago, we are now told, the "military mind" in the British War Office persistently refused even to look into the possibilities of mechanical "tanks" —but long before the end of the Great War these utter impossibilities had become a decisive factor in modern warfare.

In a living, changing, growing world like our own, the very word "impossible" is at best only a relative term: relative to our own social heritage, our personal prejudices, above all to our familiar habits. Even what we call "expert opinion" has not infrequently proved in retrospect to be in large

part a learned lingo for the rationalizing of current habits and prejudices, and the maintenance of the complacent customs of the *status quo*. Every worthy achievement in human history, like every great social advance, was "impossible" until somebody did it—usually in the face of skepticism if not of ridicule. Napoleon showed his genius not least in his refusal to have any general on his staff in whose vocabulary the word "impossibility" appeared. There is much to be said, from history as well as from recent experience, for the striking motto of a modern engineering firm: WE SPECIALIZE IN THE IMPOSSIBLE.

Such specialization in what had once seemed morally or socially or spiritually impossible has always been religion's characteristic function in human life. It specializes in the things that at first look too good to be true, too difficult to be done, too high to be ventured, too uncertain to be trusted. What it calls faith is the venturesome persistence of that Scotchman in Ceylon who, in the face of the doubt and ridicule of his neighbors and of the experts alike, planted tea and tended it with the daily care which tea always requires. What we call religious

definition, foreign missionary too. "A body of earnest people banded to gether to

experience is that which happens within and around them to men who thus, in the great word of the New Testament, "live by faith." One of the clearest evidences for the presence and power of God in the world and in human history is the response which not only the hearts of men, but the course of history and the processes of the universe itself, make to such heroic ventures of faith.

Late one spring afternoon I climbed high up on the western tiers of the crumbling Colosseum at Rome and sat there trying to reconstruct in imagination the scenes whose memory draws so many Christian pilgrims there to this day. How hopeless the odds must then have seemed, not only against the lives, but hardly less against the faith, of those little companies of men and women clad in white who knelt in prayer upon the sand while they waited for the spring of the hungry lions that came from their cages blinking in the sudden sunlight and sniffing the blood-scented air. How impregnable must have seemed the civilization and the attitudes of those terraced rows of hard-faced men and women who had come and were waiting expectant for the thrill of just that terrible moment. But now, after these

centuries, it is the Roman Empire that has long since fallen to pieces, and the stones themselves that witnessed their martyrdom are now crumbling. Meanwhile the Christian faith that sustained them even unto death lives on still, utters in prayer and testimony its agelong challenge to our contemporary paganism, and asserts its coming victories to our still incredulous generation.

How futile likewise must have seemed the solitary figure of the monk Telemachus from Asia Minor, who leaped down into that same arena generations later to protest in the name and spirit of Christ against the cruelties and needless slaughter of the gladiatorial combats, and who paid for his brave protest with his life at the bidding of the angered multitude. But the direct result of his martyrdom was the speedy abolition of those combats by a public opinion and conscience stirred by his heroic self-sacrifice, and those combats have never since been renewed. It must have seemed on the day of his death that his appeal was hopeless; that the habits and attitudes of the mass of his contemporaries, like the Colosseum itself, were too firmly

set to be moved. But we can see now that the ultimate victory lay with his faith—at the cost of his own life.

'By the light of burning heretics Christ's bleeding feet I track,
Toiling up new Calvaries ever with the cross that turns not back,
And these mounts of anguish number how each generation learned
One new word of that grand Credo which in prophet-hearts hath burned
Since the first man stood God-conquered with his face to heaven upturned.

Count me o'er earth's chosen heroes—they were men that stood alone,
While the men they agonized for hurled the contumelious stone,
Stood serene, and down the future saw the golden beam incline
To the side of perfect justice, mastered by their faith divine,
By one man's plain truth to manhood and to God's supreme design.

For Humanity sweeps onward: where to-day the martyr stands,
On the morrow crouches Judas with the silver in his hands;
Far in front the cross stands ready and the crackling fagots burn,

> While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe return
> To glean up the scattered ashes into history's golden urn."[1]

The lesson of social history that appears so plainly in this long retrospect does not lack for more recent confirmation. At the time of the American Revolution Edmund Burke was certainly one of the wisest of living men, fairly to be called an expert in matters political and social. He is on record as having then declared that slavery was an ineradicable evil, for the elimination of which from the economic and social order there was no real hope so long as men were men. Within fifty years of that confident prediction, his own country had freed itself from the curse of slavery, and within eighty years our own land had done the same. It would be unfair and untrue, in view of the support of slavery by Christians of those days who appealed to the letter of both the Old Testament and the New on its behalf, to claim that the abolition of slavery was the direct and exclusive achievement of the Christian conscience and faith of the nine-

[1]James Russell Lowell, "The Present Crisis."

teenth century. But it would be equally unfair and untrue not to point out that the Christian estimate of the infinite value of every human soul "for whom Christ died," in the sight of God. Who loves all men and all races alike, as Jesus had declared that value and as John Woolman, John Greenleaf Whittier, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and many others had come to feel it, was a main factor in the great but terribly costly achievement which less than a century before had seemed impossible to so wise a man as Edmund Burke.

At the Anti-Saloon League Convention at Columbus in 1911, to which an old temperance crusader had persuaded our church to send its minister as a delegate, I said in my skeptical soul that the slogan across the Convention platform, "*A Saloonless Nation by 1920*," was much too good to be true, and was only the pious hope of some fanatics whose zeal had run away with their judgment. But it was my lack of faith rather than their confidence that the event has proved erroneous. Through a combination of causes that no man could then have foreseen, and with a rapidity and completeness that still seems almost incredible, the saloon

as so many of us knew it in our youth disappeared from American life even before 1920. The time schedule of the radical reformers was itself too slow. I make no claim to predict the future of prohibition, and have no wisdom to forecast the exact course and forms which it may yet take; but I do notice that even the most strenuous advocates of some modification of the Volstead Act all agree that they have no desire or intention of restoring the commercialized saloon of our youth. That, they admit, is gone forever.

The two poles of life considered in this chapter are perhaps the most difficult for reconciliation and synthesis among all the polarities which we are discovering; they are both of them intensely practical and urgent for mind and conscience alike, while the others may seem easier to leave for later adjustment. At the one end of life are the interests, conventions, and opinions of the social group to which we belong; at the other end, our own interests, convictions, and duties as individuals. In relation to these two equally indispensable yet frequently conflicting aspects, life as we have to live it

seems much of the time like an egg that cannot stand steady on either end, but at once begins to roll about in shifting and unstable equilibrium now this way and now that. The only way in which either end can get and stay on top is by doing some damage to the other end. The adjustment between these two poles of human life, the social and the individual, is similarly the perennial problem that Aristotle defined as the reconciliation of order and liberty, and that we moderns sense as the constant tension between security and progress. It is both ancient and modern experience that periods in which the interests of social order and security stand uppermost, do frequent damage to the interests and convictions of individuals. Conversely, periods of rapid transition where the voice of the individual wins a ready hearing for his new or unconventional points of view, usually terrify the conservative by their apparent loss of social stability and security; but often prove in retrospect to have been periods of real though by no means always steady or uninterrupted progress. The complete reconciliation of this most difficult "*both . . . and*" has never yet been achieved in any

age of history or by any form of human organization; and yet it is a reconciliation toward which human life must constantly steer if it is really to progress. Jesus' vision of the kingdom of God on earth, with its estimate of the individual as infinitely precious and its prayer for the will of God to be fully done, is clear indication that for his religious faith these two poles of life are both to find complete fulfillment when that kingdom is fully come. But he never concealed either his experience or his expectation that those individuals who, like himself, are dedicated to the service of that kingdom, will find a cross not unlike his own somewhere along the road that leads toward its establishment.

To those who think on these things, and find difficult if not impossible any complete synthesis in the world as we know it of the interests of the individual and the stability of society, it is significant that Jesus based his assurance of the ultimate reconciliation of these often apparently conflicting poles of life upon his faith in God, Whose love goes out to each child of His as if he were the only one, and Whose redemptive purposes include the common life of all men no less

than the individual welfare of each. How and when this consummation will be realized, Jesus frankly declared that he did not know; but that at last it will be realized, his faith in the wisdom, goodness and power of God assured him. Religion, and particularly the Christian religion, can never lose sight of either aspect of this gospel of Jesus without its own impoverishment and inevitable one-sidedness. The gospel which our fathers proclaimed as a message to the individual, and which we moderns have emphasized as a program for society, is in its fullness a gospel for *both*, summoning society to a new solicitude for each individual in its midst, and laying upon the mind and conscience of the individual an obligation whose high cost is the price of social progress. That those crosses which are taken up in the name and spirit of Christ are never finally failures or decisive defeats, however dark and inexplicable for the moment their Gethsemane and Good Friday may seem to the sufferer himself, is the very heart of the Christian faith in the living God.

There are plenty of folk in our modern world who are trying to stand the egg on one end—at whatever cost to the other end.

The practice of our age, at least in the democratic Occident, tends toward a rampant individualism. In the specious cry for "personal liberty" that resounds throughout our own land; in the demand of men of affairs that they be left to run their own business without let or hindrance from the law of the land or from the social conscience; in the arrogance of extreme nationalism, asserting its sovereign right to do as it likes when it pleases; in the familiar protest of the younger generation not only against compulsion, but also against conformity; in the widespread interest in religion that at the same time has little or no concern for the organized institution of religion called the church—in all these contemporary tendencies this swing toward individualism appears plainly enough. At every one of these points, however, further consideration and deeper examination reveal the inadequacy of such individualism for a world so essentially interrelated as our own. In the familiar word of scripture, "none of us liveth to himself."

A brother minister recently reported to me a striking illustration of this characteristic modern tendency, and an answer to its

plausible arguments that has seemed to some of us truly inspired. A wife and mother in his congregation was refusing to submit to the operation her physician recommended and indeed urged, on the ground that her body was her own to do with as she chose, and that this was her choice. The doctor and her husband, unable to overcome her persistent attitude, asked her minister to talk with her about the matter. When she stated to him her conviction that she had a right to take whatever chances she chose with the body that was entirely her own, his reply was: "Has then your mother, who bore you in blood and tears, no stake in your body? Has your husband, with whom your religion has pronounced you one flesh, no stake in it? Have your children, whom you yourself have borne, no stake in it? Is your body so entirely your own to do with as you please, without regard to the rights of all these others?" At the close of their talk, the patient asked the minister to send for her doctor that the operation might be performed as soon as possible.

While the practice of our time, especially in America with its strong individualistic

tradition, thus runs toward the absence of social restraint, the thinking of our age, on the other hand, is emphasizing the control of the group as frequently unrealized, but always dominant. Our social science is constantly reminding us how little we have that we have not received from those who have lived before us or are now living around us. The individual, with all his initiative and originality, can contribute or accomplish only very little, we are told. Language itself, education in home and school, fashion and convention and tradition in things small and large, the overwhelming pressure of herd opinion, especially in a country like America which likes to think it recognizes the individual, but actually forces him into the mold of conformity—these are all powerful implements of social control. "Tired radicals" grow weary of the long battle against public inertia and acquiescence; and even so vigorous a fighter for better things as Lincoln Steffens has lately surprised the associates of his strenuous youth by his more recent counsel that perhaps it is wiser to run in any direction with a strong contemporary social tide than to try to stem it. Evidently it is only a sensi-

tive conscience and a strong will that can hold men steady at their post of personal conviction when "everybody's doing it." At such times religion at its best is sorely needed to sensitize and fortify the individual against strong social pressure. That this is indeed the historic function and the actual power of the Christian religion, is strikingly shown by the ringing word of the early Christians, standing square and firm against a tremendous social pressure toward conformity. "We ought to obey God rather than men."

The thesis of this lecture is that in both these current emphases, the individual and the social, there are indispensable elements of permanent value which must be safeguarded if humanity is on the one hand to hold the ground it has already gained, and is on the other to move forward to better things. Mankind advances very much as a man walks: one foot leads off, and then the other foot catches up or goes ahead. Progress is the resultant of both these movements, and requires the action of each foot in regular alternation. Just so humanity advances by the courageous action of the individual whose progressive thinking and

sensitized conscience push him out ahead of the group; but the group must then catch up or go even beyond the point he has gained, if the advance is to be held for society and for posterity. There is an inevitable instability of equilibrium, therefore, in all social progress, just as there is in walking. The burden at any given moment rests disproportionately either upon the individual or on the group, while the other is catching up and taking over the weight of the "body politic." The contemporary situation with regard to prohibition in our own country is a striking evidence of this. Individuals and groups whom the metropolitan newspapers like to satirize as "noisy minorities," led the nation in a great social advance with which our national legislation then caught up. Meanwhile, however, there are plenty of individual Americans whose personal habits and attitudes lag well behind the point which this social legislation has already occupied, and who find great difficulty in themselves "catching up." The more rapid the rate of progress, the more necessary is this constant alternation between individual advances and social ratifications, and the more unstable is the apparent equilibrium

of the body politic at any given instant. Only when we are standing stock still are both feet planted firmly on the ground side by side.

In the inevitable interval between the two feet, whenever real advance is being made, lies much of the cost and most of the tragedy involved in all progress. The very fact that the individual's mind and conscience move out in advance of the social group, exposes him as a pioneer to misunderstanding, criticism, and persecution from the rear. That is the inevitable price of advance, until the group catches up. Only where there is the sudden jump of a revolution, taken by both feet together, is this sacrifice of the individual sometimes avoided; and then at the cost of the stability and steady advance of humanity as a whole, which, like the individual pedestrian, moves ahead faster and better by alternate steps of steady walking than by sudden jumps of revolution. The price of such steady progress, however, as Jesus so plainly saw, is the cross which that individual must carry who leads out ahead.

It is always easier to see this at a distance than close at hand, just as it is always easy

to find abundant reason for "standing pat" alongside contemporary opinion. When we were sailing homeward from Bombay three years ago, the orthodox Hindus of that city were holding a great public meeting of protest against the heresy and radicalism of Mahatma Gandhi, in his campaign on behalf of the outcasts and untouchables who number one-fifth of the whole population of India. The epithets and denunciations hurled at him from that platform, as reported in the press on the day of our sailing, sounded strangely like the attacks of American Fundamentalists on their Modernist brethren, and like the attitude also of many Anglo-Saxons toward their fellows who espouse the cause of those racial groups in our American life who suffer from social prejudice and discrimination. Mahatma Gandhi, they declared, was abandoning the traditions of the fathers and the faith once for all delivered to the saints, and was shaking the very foundations of social security. It is easy for a visitor to India, particularly a Christian visitor, to see that Gandhi is striking straight at one of the central wrongs in Indian life, as he himself declares; and that he as an Indian can do more to over-

come it than any leader of another race or faith. It is not so easy, however, for American Christians to face the same inevitable conflict with their own social traditions of race prejudice, and with the popular passion that is certain to vent itself upon those who call in question the traditional attitudes. American Christians who dare ten years afterwards to support and seek to further the ideals of international peace for which America ostensibly entered the Great War, are likely to find themselves branded as pacifists and black-listed as dangerous citizens by organizations of noisy patrioteers. American Christians who are ready to go beyond the current conventions in their personal relationships with other racial and social groups than their own, are likely to find to their personal cost that martyrdom is still a social fact to this day, even though the fires of physical persecution have long since been extinguished.

It is this contemporary interpretation and application which has appeared in much of the most illuminating recent Christian thinking about the cross of Christ. More and more plainly it appears that the cross on Calvary is a dramatic disclosure, not only,

as Horace Bushnell once said, of the eternal cross in the heart of God, Who suffers for and with His blind and erring children; but also of the age-long cross which is the price of all social and spiritual progress, and which those who closely follow Christ must each and all in their own day and generation take up and bear. In his last Palm Sunday sermon, the most famous of Cole Lecturers, Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, put this truth with characteristic insight and power. His penetrating words may well search the minds and consciences of all of us who profess and call ourselves Christians.

The most disturbing fact about the crucifixion is that those who sent Christ to the cross were ordinary business men acting from familiar and ordinary motives. The people in Jerusalem who crucified Jesus were just like people everywhere, and the motives that persuaded them were the partisan motives that operate to-day. Who, then, killed Jesus?

First, religious people, who felt their prejudices to be very sacred. So far from being bad folk, they were among the best of their time. The conventional type of official clergy of the organized and established religion helped crucify Jesus, and they have been doing it ever since.

Second, business men, who discovered that large profits feel very good, helped to kill Jesus. They

were not bad men. They had no desire to hurt Jesus. They were simply running a profitable business in the temple courts according to the current rules of the game. But when Jesus overturned the tables of the money-changers he touched Jerusalem in its most sensitive nerve—profit. The business section felt that this high-handed interference with trade was not to be patiently endured. It is an old story; it has been going on ever since.

Third, the politicians of Jerusalem, doing what politicians have to do, playing safe, helped to kill Jesus. Pilate was not altogether a bad man. That crowd out there, yelling at him, had been well instructed what to say. All that Pilate did was what politicians have been doing ever since and are notoriously doing yet: he played safe.

There isn't anything in Jerusalem that last week, when Christ was so disowned and crucified, that is not like ourselves. Even the crowds were simply a typical exhibition of mob psychology. We cannot stand off on a superior level and look down on ancient Jerusalem this holy week. There is not a motive that swayed the lives of men then that does not sway them now, and we should bow in penitence at the thought that in our familiar lives, personal and organized, are all the motives which nailed Jesus to his cross.

# CHAPTER VI

## IN THE WORLD, BUT NOT OF IT

"What I here want to suggest is that the truth about this world is certainly so manifold, so paradoxical, so capable of equally truthful and yet seemingly opposed descriptions, as to forbid us to declare a philosopher wrong in his doctrine merely because we find it easy to make plausible a doctrine that at first sight appears to conflict with his own. Young thinkers always find refutation easy, and old doctrines not hard to transcend; and yet what if the soul of the old doctrines should be true just because the new doctrines seemingly oppose, but actually complete them? Our reflective insights, in following our life, will find now this, now that aspect of things prominent. What if all the aspects should contain truth? What if our failure thus far to find and to state the absolute philosophy were due to the fact, not that all the philosophies thus far have been essentially false, but that the truth is so wealthy as to need not only these, but yet other and future expressions to exhaust its treasury?"

"The Spirit of Modern Philosophy," by Josiah Royce. Houghton, Mifflin Company, Publishers.

## CHAPTER VI

### IN THE WORLD, BUT NOT OF IT

THE conversation aboard our sailboat off the Maine coast in summer is not usually very serious. When I get away on vacation, with an uneasy tiller in my hand, an uneasy boat under me, and a white sail overhead, I always feel an incorrigible impulse to let the problems of the universe take care of themselves for the present at least, while I watch the trembling luff of the sail, the oncoming wave, and the look of the weather sky. But one day last summer it was quite different. We had as our house guest Professor Radhakrishnan, who holds the George V Chair of Philosophy at the University of Calcutta and who had just given the Haskell Lectures at the University of Chicago on the Hindu view of life. Among our little company on board was also our summer neighbor, Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick. That day I did not watch wind and wave and sky so carefully, for the conversation was much too absorbing. It began with a friendly discussion of missions

in India, from the Hindu and the Christian points of view. Before very long it turned to the even deeper and more difficult question of the meaning of life, as the Orient sees it from one side and the Occident from another. As we were heading back into the harbor late in the afternoon, Dr. Fosdick, with that combination of penetrating insight and vivid statement which is no small part of the secret of his incomparable preaching, summed up the substance of our long discussion in one memorable sentence: "We of the West specialize in *transforming* the world, and you of the East in *transcending* it; the whole truth surely is that each of us has something to learn from the other."

Perhaps only those who have lived at least for a little while in the Orient can realize how much truth that tight-wrapped and weighty sentence contains. Our West with its science and invention has developed a practical technique for manipulating and utilizing the outer world around us. Railroads, bridges, motor cars, steel and cotton mills, all imported from the West, have already begun to transform the external conditions even of the "immemorial East." The impression of the visitor to India is that

they would transform her life even faster and further, if it were not for the huge inertias of her deep-rooted traditions and superstitions. Selective breeding might in a few generations greatly improve the quality of her live stock; intensive agriculture might multiply the yield of her fields; better methods of business organization, combining into larger units the resources and abilities of individuals who now for the most part carry on her trade each in his own little shop, would stimulate her industry and commerce; wider education would steadily lift the levels upon which her millions live. Only by the combined use of all these levers at once can the crushing burdens of India's poverty, ignorance, and superstition be lightened upon her patient shoulders. The West can and must help the East thus to transform the outer aspects of life.

But does this imply that the Orient has nothing to teach us in return? Some years ago I was walking down Fifth Avenue in New York City one Sunday morning with a college mate who is notably successful in the business life of the metropolis. He suddenly interrupted our casual conversation with a remark I have never forgotten. "What a

strange town this is: thousands upon thousands of people struggling all day to make money, and then sitting up half the night to spend it—and very few of them ever stopping to ask what it's all about!" The question as to what life is all about is one which we Americans prefer for the most part not to raise, contenting ourselves rather with absorption in the tasks and pleasures of the day and the hour, and with optimistic confidence in our prospects for the future. So long as we can buy a better car every year or two, can hope sooner or later to build a house with perfect plumbing and all the modern conveniences, can increase each year the time we have free for golf, and can look forward to part of each winter in Florida and all our old age in California, with income sufficient to provide for ourselves and our children upon this scale, and with movies and bridge to fill the time so full that we shall not have to think too much—why raise the question what life is all about? The instant anything happens, however, to break through this regular routine of our living and to plunge us beneath its comfortable surface, the age-long questions, which none of these externals of our modern civilization

can answer or avoid, thrust themselves inexorably upon us. As a college-trained woman put it to me when for the second time within a few years we were burying a child of hers, the terrible thing about life is that it is so easy to skate along upon its surface until tragic experiences suddenly come to make us realize how little we have within ourselves to meet them with. A shrewd observer of American life remarked recently that as a nation we are "going nowhere at sixty miles an hour." Most of us, thrilled with the accelerating speed of our high-powered cars and faster trains and swifter aëroplanes, do not realize that the crucial question still remains, not how fast we can travel, but whither we are bound. Perhaps our own generation has less of an answer ready for that fundamental question than any of its predecessors.

It is striking, however, to see the signs multiply that this ultimate question as to the meaning of life is pressing itself home upon the minds and hearts of the more thoughtful even among our own preoccupied and strenuous generation. The reflective statesman is raising it. In his recent lectures at the University of Virginia on "Asia

in the Twentieth Century," Sir Frederick Whyte, first President of the Indian Legislative Assembly, puts thus the perspectives suggested by his own five years of intimate experience with the Orient:

In an earlier passage in this argument we described the motive of our civilization as the worship of speed, and we were led to suspect that the Asiatic had some reason for saying that our progress is merely motion without a motive. For, unless we are conscious of a purpose beyond the mere exercise of material power, we cannot say that our speed will carry us to any destination whatsoever. If we conceive of the universe merely as a playground for the skill of man, we remain incomplete, lacking the motive of all high endeavor. The triumphs of man over nature are a legitimate pride to us, but they cannot give complete satisfaction, for they are the means and not the end of life. The Greeks held that the better life was the aim of living, meaning that the kernel of man's existence lay outside and above the world of matter. That is precisely what we are too prone to forget; and that is the substance of the lesson which Asia offers us. . . .

Asia possesses something on which we set too light a store. If one of the lessons which the West can teach the East is the value of truth and the value of time, the East can teach the West that our view of truth is too limited and that in the effort to gain time we may sacrifice those qualities

of the human spirit which ought to enable us to use our time to the best advantage. In a word, the East teaches us the value of eternal things.

We can learn this lesson, to our enduring profit, without sacrificing the gains we have made in the material world.[1]

The same searching question is being raised by thoughtful observers in our own Western life. From a review in the British *New Statesman* of two recent books on philosophy by M. C. Otto and E. A. Singer, these striking sentences are taken:

It was Irving Babbitt who said: "The Occident is at an impasse. There are signs that it is going to be forced, however unwillingly, to return to the truths of the inner life that it has discarded." Few whose contact with modern society is other than quite superficial will deny the truth of this prophecy. The man in the street of to-day is plainly dying of spiritual starvation of the sort that comes not from a disbelief in the doctrines of the Salvation Army, but from a lack of what Mr. Otto calls a program of life, such as must ultimately rise out of some absolute ideal. Nor, he points out, is Science entirely to be blamed:

"Science has made possible the building of a naval ship at a cost which would provide an increase of 170 pounds a year for five years to the

[1] "Asia in the Twentieth Century," by Sir Frederick Whyte. Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers.

salaries of 13,000 school-teachers, but science is not responsible for the fact that the money is put into naval expansion rather than into education."

It is, in fact, a vicious circle. The material possibilities of scientific investigation have blinded us to the sense of Values, so that, when a case arises in which the sense of values is needed, Science is given the preference. Yet it is only through our sense of Values—if we have it—that we can be "human," that we can be more than machines.[2]

Any one who knows what the questions are that preoccupy and too often paralyze the best minds of the rising generation, will understand that a sense of impotence before this same persistent problem as to the meaning of life is producing no small part of the contemporary disillusionment and cynicism which are so far removed from the normal attitudes of youth, and yet are so characteristic of the sophisticated youth of to-day. In trying to explain the suicide of his own son while in college, the well-known American poet, Louis Untermeyer, has used words which locate clearly enough this blind spot in our modern civilization and our younger generation:

My son saw no reason in life and so none for it.

[2] *The New Statesman* for January 29, 1927.

All of us to-day don't know what the reason for life is. We do not understand life. Anyone who pretends to is bluffing—the ministers and all. They may be sincere in saying they know, but they don't. And so, not understanding life, we say, some of us, let's end it. That is an abnormal point of view. Certainly it is abnormal for youth. And perhaps it can be educated away.

Commenting on these moving sentences, the *Christian Century* truly says:

Only a very cold heart could fail to be touched by the pathos of those words. Even more pathetic is the resolve of the poet father to devote the rest of his life and the greater part of his fortune to the task of preventing suicides among educated youths. Here is a father whose own confusion is quite obviously a contributory factor in the pessimism of his suicide son, anxious to prevent further self-destruction by creating educational endowments. For what? To teach a new kind of religion. "Faith without religion," Untermeyer calls it. "We are almost unfitted for religion," he continued, "for religion in the old sense; we are scientific. What we want now in place of religious faith is a faith in life itself."

There is something pathetically humorous, as well as tragic, in that sentiment. What after all is religion but "faith in life itself"? The fact that Mr. Untermeyer scorns religion while he seeks for some basis of "faith in life itself" is a clear revelation of the whole confusion of our modern civiliza-

tion. Glutted with science, we have neither an adequate philosophy nor an adequate theology to deal with the problem of ultimates.[3]

If, in this perplexity of our own generation as to what life is all about, we stake our hope for an answer on the discoveries of science, present or future, we may well reflect upon the implications of two recent books by competent thinkers on the functions and limitations of science itself. In his study of the scientific revolution entitled "Aspects of Science," J. W. N. Sullivan significantly says:

> The universe, which was to have been explained in terms of little billiard balls and the law of the inverse square, is now a universe where even mystics, to say nothing of poets and philosophers, have a right to exist. . . . Except on the basis of a rationalism whose foundations have long since crumbled, there is no conflict whatever between mystical insight and science. And the man who prides himself on the complete absence of mystery in his view of the world is not only not representing the modern scientific outlook, but will speedily become quite unable to understand it.[4]

---

[3] *The Christian Century* for March 24, 1927, page 358.

[4] "Aspects of Science," by J. W. N. Sullivan. Alfred A. Knopp, Inc., publishers.

Meanwhile a young American thinker, highly trained in both philosophy and physics, in a recent work the title of which ("Science the False Messiah") sounds like a Fundamentalist diatribe against science, but which proves on examination to be a frank recognition of the limitations within which science must always move, writes these arresting words:

Science can describe what happens at certain points with uncanny accuracy and minuteness. It can provide instruments for bringing about various effects never dreamed of before in the history of man. But to determine what had better happen or to oblige us to bring about salubrious effects, science is completely impotent. Its very successes in the realm of facts and means have been made at the sacrifice of all claim even to the slightest concern with ends. . . .

The mind thrives upon negatives. Critical and tentative, it frees itself from prevailing obsessions. Turning the inner eye from immediate and necessary things, it contemplates perfection and infinity. It sits by the side of the road and lets the world pass by. With persistent curiosity it observes the spectacle of men and nations and makes amused and caustic comments. From the point of view of philosophical detachment, nearly everything in the world is done wrong. To limpid intelligence the

world is a mud bank of deceit on which crawls the human race gorging itself on self-deceit.[5]

It is at once evident that the view of life implied by this last quotation is hardly likely to inspire any very high hopes for humanity, or any very great faith in its capacities. Such a philosophy of life will scarcely quicken the high heroisms, individual and social, that have hitherto been the moving forces in lifting the levels of human life. The observation of Franklin K. Lane comes at once to mind in this connection:[6]

I do not believe we shall change this world much for the good out of any materialistic philosophy or . . . shifting of economic affairs. We need a revival—a belief in something bigger than ourselves and more lasting than the world.

One remembers too a sentence from Prof. Gilbert Murray's lectures at Harvard in 1926:[7]

---

[5] From "Science the False Messiah," by Ayers. Copyright, 1927. Used by special permission of the publishers, the Bobbs-Merrill Company.

[6] "Letters Personal and Political," by Franklin K. Lane. Houghton, Mifflin Company, publishers.

[7] "The Classical Tradition in Poetry," by Gilbert Murray. Harvard University Press, publishers.

We find our escape into that calm world of things, where stridency and clamor are forgotten in the ancient stillness, where the strong iron has long since rusted and the rocks of granite broken into dust, but the great things of the human spirit still shine like stars.

At the close of the conversation last summer which was recalled early in this chapter, Dr. H. E. Fosdick made another revealing remark, the insight and truth of which are the more apparent after this brief survey of our contemporary perplexities and disillusionments: "Only those can really *transform* the world whose vision has already *transcended* it." Before any man can work confidently and powerfully for the reshaping of his own life and of the world in which he finds himself, he must have caught at least a glimpse of a world of values more permanent and precious than anything yet realized in this shifting scene of time, in relation to which his own life, and all human life, finds its abiding significance.

It is this ability to take bearings while out of sight of land on the ocean of life, in inner relation to some unseen Magnetic Pole and with at least occasional glimpses of some spiritual North Star, that is the character-

istic genius and gift of religion to each generation of men. As Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr has pointed out, there is a constant and inevitable tension in all vital religion between the actual and the ideal world, between what is and what ought to be, between its experience of the immanence of God and its faith in the transcendence of God. Out of this tension, from this difference of level, religion draws its own characteristic energies for the transformation of the world which now is into that which is to come and ought to be. Religion can never afford or consent, therefore, to cut its contacts with either of these two poles of life, the actual or the ideal; nor can it confine itself exclusively, without losing its own peculiar power, to either of the hemispheres which center around these respective poles. It is the age-long characteristic and privilege therefore of the truly and deeply religious man to be in the world and yet not of the world.

This is a truth which India, with her special genius for transcending the world, has always understood and can still teach to our West. In our preoccupation with the technique of transforming the world, we are

forever losing the visions and exhausting the energies which must constantly be renewed if our own aims are to be realized and are to be worth their cost when attained. This is the real point of that beautiful story with which James B. Pratt concludes his notable study of "India and Its Faiths":

"What is the light of man?" was a question asked of the sage Yajnavalkya by a certain king some eight hundred years or more before Christ.

And, as one of the ancient Upanishads tells us, the sage at first gave the obvious reply: "The sun, O King; for having the sun alone for his light man sits, moves about, does his work, and returns."

But this did not satisfy the king, and he asked: "When the sun is set, O Yajnavalkya, what is the light of man?"

And again the obvious answer was made: "When the sun is set, then the moon is the light of man; for having the moon alone for his light man sits, moves about, does his work, and returns."

"But when the sun is set, and the moon is set, what is the light of man?"

And once more Yajnavalkya answered, and this time quite in the spirit of modern applied science: "When the sun is set, and the moon is set, then fire is the light of man; for having fire alone for his light man sits, moves about, does his work, and returns."

But the recurring question came again: "When

the sun is set, and the moon is set, and the fire is gone out, what is the light of man?"

To this there is but one reply; and Yajnavalkya gave it last: "When the sun is set, and the moon is set, and the fire is gone out, the soul is the light of man!"[8]

Just here, however, comes our characteristic modern question: What do we mean by the "soul"? That this is no academic question merely, a sentence or two from a recent letter written by a business man who is a member of our own church will plainly show: "As I listened to your sermon a week ago to-day upon the theme, 'Man Lives Not to Himself Alone,' an inquiry came to my mind, as it has not infrequently at intervals during the past two years, 'What and where is a man's soul?' How does it manifest itself in his life?" It is not difficult to see how this frequent perplexity has arisen for our modern minds. Just as the ancients used to locate heaven and hell somewhere in the physical universe above and below us, so they used to locate the soul as if it were a bodily organ within us. But our dissecting knife does not find such a soul within us,

[8] "India and Its Faiths," by J. B. Pratt. Houghton, Mifflin Company, publishers.

any more than our telescope discovers a physical heaven and hell somewhere in space. The first effect of this realization is naturally a question whether the one of these has any more actual reality than the other.

Further reflection makes it more and more plain, however, as President Butler of Columbia recently remarked in a public address, that in spite of radical changes in the terminology of our newer psychology, any attempt to drive out at the door of life what we mean when we say soul, finds that meaning coming in once more under another name at the window. Most of us now find ourselves using other words, like "personality," to include what our fathers meant by "soul." It remains a permanent aspect of reality in our experience of life at its richest and worthiest, however much our definitions and interpretations of it may change. It is significant that the title of the last chapter of the volume on "Personality," in the International Library of Psychology, Philosophy, and Scientific Method, from the pen of a Scotch physician who has all the results of the newer psychology at his disposal, is "The Spiritual Aspect of Personality."

From that chapter these illuminating sentences are taken:

It would seem quite certain that some sort of spiritual outlook is essentially a human characteristic, and is inevitable, once self-consciousness and reflective thought have emerged as new entities in the march of evolution. Moreover, some sort of philosophy of life is absolutely necessary, if the personality is to be properly organized and enabled to get through life. One of the most characteristic features of the maladapted neurotic is that he is not provided, in many cases, with an adequate philosophy of life. The phrase "philosophy of life" is used in preference to religion, because a religion may be professed by certain people, without their acquiring thereby any adequate working scheme to afford them an explanation of their true relationship with the environment and with the universe as a whole. This is not to say that religion in its various forms does not serve many personalities as a perfectly adequate, and indeed for them, the only possible philosophy. . . .

In virtue of this freedom, therefore, man has some power to mold and influence his emergent pattern of behavior—his spiritual life, and therefore his responsibility to the future. It is in respect of this emergent pattern that he survives. It is in respect of this that he helps or hinders God—the intervenient deity. It is in respect of this, that he approaches or recedes from the quality of deity—that he attains Godhead. It is this function of the synthesized complete personality that gives him

significance. It is possible that here we may discover the secret of the soul, the secret of immortality, and the secret of communion with God. The answers to these riddles may be found, not in the realm of structure, but in that of function. May it be that the soul is not a part of the structure of the body, as the ancients believed, nor a function of that body, but the function of the total emergent personality which goes on exerting its influence through the ages, just in so far as its activities have altered the form of the universe. In some cases this influence is widespread, in others it is extremely local, but no one can live in the world without making some impression on the form of the universal whole.[9]

In similar strain the review from the *New Statesman* already quoted concludes, "What we need to rediscover, if we can, is the soul"; and quotes from our American philosopher, M. C. Otto, of the University of Wisconsin, writing on "Things and Ideals," as follows:

Let it be taken to heart that soul is not the name of a thing, but of a life; that the soul's salvation is not a commodity or gift to be bought or begged, but a development to be attained; that to save one's soul is . . . the creation of a tvpe of personality through loyalty to concrete values as these are at

[9] "Personality," by R. G. Gordon. Harcourt, Brace & Co., publishers.

issue in everyday experience. It is an inner richness, and ripeness, a sensitiveness to truth, to beauty, to the dignity of life.

We shall not thus rediscover the soul in ourselves or in others, however, merely through any process of intellectual analysis, any more than by any process of physical dissection. Rather we shall see the soul in action and find it in experience. It is with the soul exactly as it is with friendship, love, religion, and indeed with life itself. Each one of these proves impossible of exact or adequate definition, and all attempts to penetrate their secrets by abstract analysis inevitably fail. Each and all of them, however, are genuinely given to us in personal experience when certain essential conditions are obediently met, and are revealed to us constantly as actual and powerful in people whom we know. In the process of life itself we find them all at work, *both* transforming the world *and* transcending it. In such personal discovery and experience, the soul reveals itself, within ourselves and even more undeniably in others, as the *quality* of our living, as what Dr. Gordon finely calls "the spiritual aspect of personality."

All of this, however, is easier to see and

realize in the concrete than in the abstract. Fifty years ago a young engineer of great professional promise became engaged to a girl of rare mental keenness and personal charm, when suddenly she lost her eyesight. She wanted to break their engagement because of her blindness, but he refused. Through these later years many of us have been often in their home in the university community where he became a professor, and have watched her touch and transform the lives of scores of students, enrich the common life of the community, and triumph over her own physical limitation in a richness of life which few people discover. As she transcended in her youth that physical limitation, so in her old age she has transcended her husband's death. It is small wonder to us who know her, in view of her complete conquest of what would have seemed to others a cruel and hopeless fate, that she has now so vivid an assurance of her husband's immortality and so sustaining an expectation of her own. Her soul seems to us far more real and enduring than her frail body. She makes convincing to us once more that memorable sentence with which George Herbert Palmer concluded his bi-

ography of his wife, Alice Freeman Palmer: "Though no regrets are proper for the manner of her death, who can contemplate the fact of it and not call the world irrational, if out of deference to a few particles of disordered matter it exclude so fair a spirit?"

Among my college classmates there was a physician, Francis Weld Peabody, who within twenty years of his graduation in medicine had become world-famous as one of the most brilliant and promising professors, not only in the Harvard Medical School, but in the entire medical world. Some months ago his colleagues, after an exploratory operation, found that he had an inoperable cancer of the stomach and gave him six months to live. A common friend ventured the prediction to me not long thereafter, that his spiritual contribution to the world in what little of life remained for him might yet prove at least as valuable as would have been the results of a long lifetime of medical research. In the fifteen months through all of which he showed a host of professional associates and personal friends what it means, not only to face death bravely, as countless other men have, but to prove himself spiritually "more

than conqueror" over it, he has become to us who knew and loved him the most powerful and convincing evidence for personal and family religion that we have ever seen. His father said to me that he himself rarely entered the house where his son was ill and his two infant grandchildren were playing about the floor, without thinking of that great word in the New Testament, "Death hath no more dominion over him." A medical colleague told me that he had seen my classmate, more than six months after the discovery of his own disease, sit down by the bedside of another sufferer struck down with the same affliction and talk quietly for half an hour to a group of medical students on what could be done to make that sufferer comfortable—with no suggestion in the whole half hour of his own impending fate. I myself had a letter from him, written in his own hand a month after his own death sentence, in which these words appear: "I have never realized so fully the closeness—the identity even—of religion and science as in these last weeks. No one who has never worked to find what we call 'natural laws' can realize how little we know of the physical laws that control the universe, or

can have such faith that all things of the spirit are also subject to a higher law of which we now and then see only flashes." Instead of living to transform the world by long years of medical service, it was given to him to transcend the world by such a spiritual triumph of life over death as has made some of us see new symbolic meaning in the old story of Elijah's translation to heaven in a chariot of fire. Within a month of his recent death, his widow wrote thus of him: "Francis performed the one miracle that lies within the power of us humans (when our powers are equal to it). He took something ugly and tragic in itself and turned it into something holy and beautiful for all who came in contact with him."

What souls like these have done before the eyes of us who knew them, Jesus Christ has done for the centuries and for mankind. He never defined nor argued about that quality of living which we mean when we say "soul," any more than he argued about or defined what he meant by "God." Rather he lived a life whose quality has become to mankind ever since our clearest revelation of the higher capacities of human personality and of the reality and character of God. His

spirit, caught by other men through spiritual contagion, has become the most powerful personal force in history, inspiring men on the one hand to transform this present world till God's will is done here also, and on the other to transcend our human failures and sorrows and tragedies, even as he transfigured his cross. The Biblical accounts of his empty grave and physical resurrection, however much they may help some among us to believe in his victory over the world and over death itself, are by no means so essential to that living faith as is the continuing presence and power of his quality of life in and through his followers and friends unto this day. His words, with their quiet assurance of victory over the world and over death, come down the centuries to us also: Because I live *thus*, ye may live *thus*—and ye shall live also!

In a great Easter sermon recently published, the philosopher-poet of the American pulpit, Dr. George A. Gordon, compares our human life to a cathedral window. Viewed from the outside and away from the light, it appears dusty, dingy, and even disfiguring in the architecture of the great building. So appears often our human life itself, when we

look away from the light of faith and hope and love. But seen from the inside, toward the light, that same window reveals "the character, the figure, the fire, the splendor, the composition, and the transcendent beauty that almost overwhelm us." So is human life also, when we turn our own faces toward the Light:

> "Built of tears and sacred flames,
> And by virtue reaching to its aims;
> Built of furtherance and pursuing,
> Not of spent deeds, but of doing."

And to him who thus turns not only his face, but his whole life toward that Light, there comes a yet deeper assurance:

> "What is excellent,
> As God lives, is permanent;
> Hearts are dust, hearts' loves remain;
> Heart's love shall meet thee again."

Piedmont College Library
10059980

DATE DUE

| | |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

GAYLORD PRINTED IN U.S.A.

BR 125 .G494 1928

Gilkey, Charles Whitney,
1882-1968.

Present-day dilemmas in
religion